

Palestinian dies of wounds in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A Palestinian died in hospital on Monday one month after he was shot and wounded by Israelis in the occupied Gaza Strip, doctors said. Officials at the Gaza Strip's Shifa Hospital said Awad Abu Lehiya, 27, from Karara village, was shot in the chest on March 2 after Palestinians buried stones at an Israeli car in the Gaza Strip. At least one passenger opened fire, Palestinians said. In the West Bank town of Qalqilya, unknown assailants shot dead Ibrahim Mohammad Ali Najim, 33, on suspicion he was helping Israel, residents said.

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Iraqi rebellion appears crushed

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI ANNOUNCED Monday it had retaken the last border town from Kurdish rebels, and the dissidents admitted that they had been pushed out of the area.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said the town, Iraq's northernmost Kurdish city just across the border from Turkey, was freed from the rebels at noon local time (0900 GMT).

"The rebels were kicked out of the town and ran away in fear. A number of rebels surrendered to our units," said INA.

Rebel leaders including Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, returning from exile, used Zakho as a base in the early days of the rebellion against the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The two leaders later moved to

Dobuk, farther south, but that town fell to Iraqi troops Sunday.

Kurdish rebel spokesman in Damascus said Monday that their Pashmurga guerrillas were withdrawing from major population centres.

On Sunday, the government proved its control over the third city, the oil centre of Kirkuk, by taking foreign reporters on a tour through its battle-ravaged streets.

INA reported on Sunday that Iraqi troops captured Erbil and Dobuk, saying Kurdish fighters fled, leaving their weapons behind. "The people of Dobuk and Erbil received our armed forces with national songs and cheering President Saddam Hussein," it said.

At that point, rebel spokesmen in London and Damascus claimed their forces still held Erbil and Dobuk, about 50 kilometres

south of the Turkish border. But Monday morning, Kurdish fighters in Iraq conceded government troops had won the two cities.

A spokesman in Damascus for the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), led by Mr. Barzani, said he had no information on whether Zakho had fallen.

He said the KDP leader was somewhere in the mountains.

A spokesman for Mr. Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said he had no word on the situation in Zakho either but that fighting was raging in the nearby town of Fayshkhabur.

Mr. Talabani was somewhere in Dobuk province, he said.

In Ankara, the semi-official Anatolian news agency said Iraqi government troops Monday captured Habur on the Iraqi-Turkish border from rebel Kurds.

It said the troops used tanks

and helicopters to recapture the frontier village which was seized by rebels last month.

Iraqi helicopters bombed the rebels and military convoys ferried reinforcements to Habur after it was taken, the agency said.

Kurdish rebels captured Habur about two weeks ago and hoisted their red, green and yellow flag. It was later removed so as not to provoke Turkey.

Habur is the only official crossing point from Iraq into Turkey. Turkey is opposed to an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, fearing it would fuel separatism among its own 12-million-strong Kurdish minority.

They make up about half of the total Kurdish population in the Middle East.

Rebel spokesmen said the rebels would regroup and counter-attack to try to regain Kirkuk,

which had been the Kurd's big prize in the rebellion which began in the chaotic aftermath of the Gulf war.

After retaking Kirkuk, the government said on Sunday, its troops moved on to smash rebel forces in Dobuk, 40 km from the Turkish border, and Erbil, 80 km north of Kirkuk, in a lightning offensive.

Kirkuk, which has changed hands several times during the fighting appeared to be firmly under government control but almost deserted, according to Western reporters taken there on Sunday by the Iraqi government (see page 2).

The loss of Kirkuk, Erbil, Dobuk and Zakho — would leave Sulaimaniya, near the Iranian border, as the only major town still in rebel hands.

A spokesman for PUK re-

ported battles in the Makhmour area southwest of Erbil.

The Kurds and Shiite Muslims in the south began simultaneous but apparently uncoordinated rebellion after the Gulf war at the end of February.

Some Kurds said the flight of hundreds of thousands of Kurds from the cities for the first time had a disastrous effect on morale.

Iraqi troops moved against the Kurds after beating back the Shiites. INA said the Iraqi government was supplying food to the captured areas.

INA quoted the newspaper Al Joumhuriya as saying Monday that searches in Erbil and Kirkuk produced "weapons, equipment and documents that confirm the involvement of more than one foreign party in the events of March in the region."

The countries were not named, but Iraq has accused Iran of helping the insurgents in the past. Iran denies the claim.

INA also said that Iraq had told the United Nations that March 30-31 the United States had carried out 92 aircraft sorties, mostly over Baghdad.

"The enemy conducted its sorties for purposes of provocation and reconnaissance. Its aircraft repeatedly flew over the city of Baghdad at low altitude," the INA report said.

Reuters reported from Safwan, in U.S.-held Iraq, that troops loyal to the government have regained total control of southern Iraq and army units have been leaving to fight Kurdish rebels in the north.

"The Iraqi troops established total control in the south in the past three or four days and they are now moving north to handle

the Kurdish problem," one U.S. officer told Reuters.

But one group of Egyptian construction workers reported continuing skirmishes between government troops and Shiite rebels in Amara on the Tigris River near the border with Iran.

Captain William Schafer, speaking at Checkpoint Charlie, the last U.S. position on the road from Kuwait to Basra, Iraq's second largest city, said Iraqi troops had apparently been cutting off escape routes for refugees, rebels and deserters.

The numbers arriving at the checkpoint had dropped Monday to about 20 from about 50 a day previously, he added.

In the past fleeing rebels repeatedly asked U.S. troops to intervene. "Now they have no more

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Israel's crackdown actions seen as counter-productive

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli moderates and Palestinians said Monday a proposed crackdown in the Israeli-occupied territories would not stop violence but increase it.

Palestinian leaders said the measures were Israel's signal to the United States and its own hard-liners that it would not bow to international pressure to cede occupied Arab territories as part of a wider Middle East peace settlement.

They said harsh measures such as increased expulsions and restrictions on Palestinian entry to occupied Jerusalem would fuel

resentment and worsen economic hardship among the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel's inner cabinet agreed Sunday to expel Palestinians deemed to have encouraged attacks against Jews, demolish their homes and further restrict access to Israel. This, according to Israeli leaders, would include occupied Arab Jerusalem, the cultural, religious, and economic heart of Palestinian society.

Israeli officials declined to give details of the cabinet meeting but Israeli media reported a decision to step up expulsions which have already been condemned by the

United States and the United Nations. Right-wingers called for the crackdown after a spate of attacks against Israelis.

"You cannot deal with the Palestinian problem with military crackdowns alone," retired General Benyamin Ben Eliezer said.

"By trying to separate the military from the political solution you're creating a Belfast situation," he told Reuters, referring to the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.

Shimon Peres, head of the

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Bishara denies GCC decided to suspend aid to Jordan, PLO

BAHRAIN (R) — The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) denied Monday it had taken a formal decision to suspend financial aid to Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) because of what is perceived as their support for Iraq in the Gulf crisis.

"No collective decision was made by the GCC to stop aid in this respect and no record of that decision was registered on any GCC agenda," GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Bishara was quoted as saying in a statement sent to Reuters.

He said his remarks about cutting aid to Jordan and the PLO made in a news conference in Kuwait last Saturday were "not accurately" reported.

"There was general talk in regard to the relationship with Jordan and the PLO leadership, including the relationship of aid without mentioning any decision," he said.

In announcing the move on Saturday, Mr. Bishara, a Kuwaiti, said: "No forgiveness, no forgetting."

He said then that the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait,

Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — could not continue supporting Jordan and the PLO.

Mr. Bishara, who has been outspoken in his criticism of the Gulf crisis positions of Jordan and the PLO, said Saturday:

"How can now justify a continuing of aid to a country that turned its back on you. There is no forgiveness for this. It is not a romance where lovers quarrel. The crime is too big to forgive," he said, referring to Jordan.

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Abuse of Palestinians changing — businessman

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's Palestinians, target of attacks since the Gulf war, are being better treated after a promise by the crown prince last week to punish those mistreating the community, a Palestinian businessman said Monday.

Adel Rishq, leader of an 11-member Palestinian delegation, met Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah Wednesday and quoted him as saying at the meeting: "Be assured that every body who mistreated Palestinians will be prosecuted and punished."

Human rights groups say some Kuwaitis took "revenge" on Palestinians after the seven-month Iraqi occupation ended in February, accusing the Palestinians of collaborating with the Iraqis.

One group, Middle East Watch, said 30 to 40 people, mainly Palestinians, had been killed and 2,000 jailed and many tortured by the army and resistance since the occupation ended.

"I think we had better results after the meeting," Mr. Rishq said. "It has been noticed from the second or third day."

"Now that people have cooled down a little bit, the situation is getting better," he told a news conference.

Mr. Rishq said his delegation of businessmen, doctors and professionals did not claim to represent the Palestinian community

and the meeting was their idea. But they believed many Palestinians shared their views.

Their aim was "to try to smooth relations, to take out the tension and to try to let everybody in the country live in peace without harassment and without hatred."

Mr. Rishq criticised Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat for supporting Iraq.

"We consider it really a violation of the PLO constitution. We should not take sides in any conflict between Arab countries. That is in the constitution of the PLO," he said.

Mr. Rishq, a partner in a chain of electrical stores, would not say whether he feared the Palestinian community in Kuwait could be expelled or reduced following the Gulf war.

But he said he believed the community, which shrank from around 400,000 before the occupation to 170,000 now, would never regain its former size.

"When these Palestinians came to Kuwait, Kuwait was under construction... I don't think Kuwait as a country can accommodate this number of people," he said.

Kuwait's government has said it intends to reduce the number of foreign residents, who far outnumbered Kuwaitis before the Gulf war.

Kuwaitis demand elections

KUWAIT (R) — Prominent Kuwaitis and opposition leaders Monday sent the Emir a list of demands urging him to set a date for parliamentary elections, for the elimination of favouritism and for popular participation in government.

Activists said the respectful but hard-hitting five-page document was sent to Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah and other leading members of the ruling family.

Similar demands to implement promised democratic reforms were also made by a group of resistance leaders — including army officers who survived the seven-month Iraqi occupation of Kuwait — during a meeting with the Emir on Sunday, one opposition activist said.

The document Monday called on the Emir to "set a date for free and clean elections for... parliament."

Sheikh Jaber dissolved the previous parliament in 1986 at the height of the Iran-Iraq war, citing a foreign conspiracy to destabilise the emirate.

The document was signed by 96 Kuwaitis including leading members of the conservative Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, Shiites

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Mubarak: Peace conference is essential, but not urgent

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said after meeting Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad Monday that an international peace conference on the Middle East was essential but did not need to take place immediately.

"The international peace conference is a must and a good umbrella for solving the whole (Arab-Israeli) problem," he said after talking to Mr. Assad for three hours.

Egypt and Syria have long been at odds on the Arab-Israeli conflict, but a new-found rapport between Cairo and Damascus has been cemented by their membership of a U.S.-led coalition that forced Iraq out of Kuwait a month ago.

"But we are not asking for an international conference to convene right away. We need to make good preparations before holding it," Mr. Mubarak said at a joint news conference with the Syrian president.

Mr. Assad said little to journalists after his talks with Mr. Mubarak on Sunday evening and Monday. It was their first meeting since Gulf war hostilities ended on Feb. 28.

But Mr. Assad did say unrest in Iraq was an internal matter and there was little his country could do to end the turmoil. Syria and Iraq are ruled by rival wings of the Baath Party and have long competed for the leadership of Arab nationalists.

Although rebellions by Kurds and Shiites in Iraq are bad for all Arabs, Mr. Assad said. "This

is an internal issue. Our ability to work to relieve what is happening is very limited."

Together Egypt and Syria have almost 60,000 troops in the U.S.-led coalition. Scores of thousands of the 540,000 Americans already have withdrawn, but Washington plans to leave an increased military air and naval presence indefinitely.

Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Assad, whose armies will be aneers of a projected Arab-based peacekeeping force in the Gulf, spoke briefly with reporters after the second session of consultations during a 24-hour visit by Mr. Assad. The two presidents agreed on the joint security force along with leaders of Saudi Ara-

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U.S. names firms, agents allegedly fronting for Iraq

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States acted on Monday to shut down Iraq's alleged secret network of arms traders and clandestine financial firms by identifying nearly 100 companies and agents as fronts for Iraq.

Washington froze the assets of the 52 businesses and 37 individuals it named Iraqi agents in a step that could lead to the use of the money to pay reparations for the Gulf war.

A sewing machine concern in Italy, an air-conditioning firm in Britain and a bank in Brazil were among those identified by the U.S. Treasury as fronts for Iraq.

Thirty-one of the 52 companies listed are in Britain. All of them appear small and privately owned.

"Exposing these companies and individuals strikes a blow at Iraq's subterranean network in the world of arms trading and clandestine financial operations," Treasury Deputy Secretary John Robson said Monday in a statement.

The treasury also named 160 Iraqi-owned or -controlled merchant ships and prohibited their use by U.S. companies or individuals.

"The action is part of an ongoing investigation... of Iraq's world-wide arms and financial complex," it said.

The move against Iraq on the

financial front contrasts with Washington's reluctance to intervene militarily to help topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Two of the companies identified — Bay Industries Inc. of California and Matrix Churchill Corp. of Cleveland — are in the United States. Neither could be reached for comment.

Individuals who do business with Iraqi agents can face criminal penalties of up to \$1 million per violation and prison sentences of up to 12 years.

Kuwait has accused President Saddam and his family of taking more than \$10 billion out of Iraq by skimming off a percentage of the country's oil sales for themselves over the past decade.

The Kuwaiti government hired Kroll Associates, an investigative agency, to investigate the affair.

U.N. consultations

The U.N. Security Council was meeting in closed session Monday for its first consultations on a proposed Gulf war ceasefire resolution.

The United States and the other four permanent council members — Britain, China, France and the Soviet Union — were meeting privately to put the finishing touches on the proposed document.

Two for one special; happy April Fool's Day

FOR ALL THOSE Jordan Times readers who did not notice that yesterday was April 1, we can only say happy fool's day. It was really special.

Sort of two for one, folks. The stories, "Another rose-red city near Petra?" that appeared on page one, and "Huge, glassy crater outside Amman baffles scientists" on page three, were concocted for the purpose of not so much to trick or feed you untrue information. Rather, it was done so that you would have a good laugh either there and then or, better still, on the next day. If you fell for both jokes, perfect. If just for one, we promise to improve next time. We do, of course, apologise for any inconvenience they may have caused any reader, especially those fellow journalists who called in for leads to further look into the two stories. Apology aside, however, we hope everybody had a big, healthy laugh. See you next year.

PLO wary of U.S. peace talk

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is wary of peace talk from the United States and will continue to encourage the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip until Israel withdraws, one of its leaders said.

Hani Al Hassan, a close associate of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, told a rally in Tunis Sunday night that Washington did not seem to have the courage to make Israel implement United Nations resolutions.

"(U.S. Secretary of State James) Baker went to (Israeli Prime Minister) Yitzhak Shamir but he doesn't mention the idea of land-for-peace in front of him. Why? Because he's afraid of the Jewish lobby, afraid of the elections next year," he said.

"No doubt there are important moves afoot but we Palestinians know them well and we know that reliance on our own strength and our own guns is the only way to bring about a solution."

"The confrontation with the Zionists must not stop until you get your land back... this time we cannot accept from anyone any idea leading to the end of the intifada because stopping the intifada would mean losing our homeland."

Mr. Hassan rejected solutions based on autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, municipal elections under occupation, or open-ended transitional periods.

But he said Palestinians in the occupied territories would welcome the chance to elect members of a new Palestine National Council (PNC).

PNC members from inside the occupied territories cannot attend the parliament because the Israeli authorities will not let them back if they leave.

"But if they (the Israelis) come and impose elections under occupation or elections for municipalities, the aim of that is to distract people with elections in order to stop the intifada," Mr.

Iran and dissidents report border clash

Combined agency dispatches

IRANIAN Revolutionary Guards clashed with opposition forces based in Iraq, the Iranian media and dissidents said Monday.

The dissidents said they had captured a strategic height inside Iran and that fighting was continuing Monday evening.

The Iranian news agency (IRNA) said opposition forces staged an attack across the Iraqi border into Iran but were driven back by Revolutionary Guards.

IRNA said Revolutionary Guards based north of the border town of Qasr-e Shirin drove back the Mujahadeen, killing many of them and capturing several more.

The Mujahadeen has accused Iran of sending heavily armed Revolutionary Guards into Iraq to attack its bases under cover of the Iraqi rebellion.

A Mujahadeen statement sent to the Jordan Times said rebel troops had captured three soldiers Sunday with identity cards indicating they were members of Islamic Jihad (holy war), a pro-Iranian Muslim fundamentalist force in Lebanon.

"Now it appears that some of the Khomeini regime's Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) and mercenaries in Lebanon have entered Iraqi territory to fight the Iranian resistance," the Mujahadeen said.

The Mujahadeen, an underground movement originally formed in 1970 to fight the Shah of Iran, was outlawed soon after the 1979 Islamic revolution led by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah

Khomeini.

The Mujahadeen said in its statement that Monday's clash occurred when Iran's Revolutionary Guards crossed into Iraqi territory to strike at bases of the National Liberation Army (NLA), the Mujahadeen's military wing.

The Mujahadeen said they had repulsed the attack on a base north of the Iraqi town of Jalala, and that the area was "littered with hundreds of bodies" of the guards corps.

Since the eruption of a rebellion in southern and northern Iraq earlier this month, the Mujahadeen have been saying their bases in Iraq, some as far as 60 kilometres inside the border, were attacked by the guards corps.

Iran has denied the allegations. Tebran Radio meanwhile quoted an "informed source" as saying that members of the Mujahadeen were attempting to infiltrate Iran, but were stopped by Iranian border guards.

The radio said Iran's "severe objection to an incursion on Iranian territory... by forces inside Iraq," was issued by Iraq's charge d'affaires in Tehran.

The report did not give any numbers of dead or injured, neither did it say how many Mujahadeen members were captured.

But it said the clash occurred north of the Qasr-e Shirin checkpoint, about midpoint in the Iran-Iraq border.

"Today, after three weeks, the

(Continued on page 5)

Communists win huge victory in Albania

TIRANA (Agencies) — The ruling communists have won a landslide victory in multi-party elections that split Albania and dealt personal defeats to President Ramiz Alia and key party reformists.

Unofficial results Monday showed the Communist Party of Labour heading for a total of two-thirds of the 250 parliamentary seats and the opposition Democratic Party urged its dejected supporters to remain calm.

Riot police were put on alert on Tirana's main diplomatic street, cordoned off since thousands of people seeking asylum abroad poured into embassies last July and triggered an exodus of 40,000 Albanians from political unrest and economic decay.

Xhelil Gjoni, Mr. Alia's number two in the Party of Labour and regarded as a hardliner, said the results proved the vitality of the ruling party and that enjoyed "the faith of the people."

He blamed the Democrats' capture of seats in Tirana, including Mr. Alia's, on his party's "separation from the masses" and said it was ready to cooperate with the intellectual-led opposition to ensure unity in the tiny Balkan state.

"Our party with comrade Ramiz Alia at its head... expresses its wish to collaborate with the

opposition for the benefit of the aspirations of the people," Mr. Gjoni told a news conference.

The elections, which officials said drew a 95 per cent turnout, spelled the end of the last one-party state in Europe. The party of Labour has held power for 16 years.

Mr. Alia, the president and party leader, lost to a little-known engineer. Unofficial reports indicated he won only 36 per cent of the vote in his contest with the Democrats' Franko Kroggi.

Mr. Gjoni told reporters he did not know how badly Mr. Alia was beaten, but added that the Party of Labour generally won 30-40 per cent of the vote in the capital.

Unofficial results early Monday also showed Communist Prime Minister Fatos Nano running even with the Democrats' Sokrat Nesturi and Foreign Minister Muhamet Kapllani easily defeated by government sports official Albert Kariqi, who ran for the Democrats.

Mr. Gjoni said the Communists are willing to cooperate with the opposition in parliament, which will write a new constitution and must deal with the country's economic misery.

But Sali Berisha, a co-leader of the Democratic Party, told about

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Capture of Afghan garrison morale booster for rebels

ISLAMABAD (R) — A stunning Afghan guerrilla victory over government forces in Khost garrison near Pakistan has given the rebels a huge psychological boost after two years of political and military stalemate, Afghan and Western analysts said Monday.

Khost City fell to Mujahideen fighters Sunday after the capture of the garrison's remaining airfield sparked a swift capitulation by thousands of defending soldiers.

Within three hours of the airfield being seized most of the government forces had surrendered. The last pockets of resistance were quelled by daylight on Monday, Mujahideen spokesman Najibullah Lafrate said.

"This is a big achievement," said Mr. Lafrate, information minister in the guerrilla government-in-exile in Pakistan. "I believe that it will be very difficult for the regime to recapture Khost."

The city's fall after a two-week offensive was strategically irrelevant, a Western diplomat in Islamabad said, but its political and psychological impact could be far reaching.

"I am surprised. Nobody thought it would fall," he said. "The Mujahideen were surprised themselves that it fell so quickly."

Mujahideen reported they had captured more than 2,500 soldiers and found between 500 and 600 wounded soldiers and militiamen in the city.

The International Committee

of the Red Cross (ICRC), which has a war hospital in the Pakistani city of Peshawar, sent a team of doctors to Khost on Monday to evaluate the position.

An ICRC spokesman in Peshawar said they had brought in two extra surgical teams to handle an expected influx of up to 200 badly wounded.

The Afghan government news agency Bakhtar made no mention of Khost's fall on Monday but ran a detailed account of Foreign Minister Abdul Wali's charge that Pakistan was directly involved in the fighting.

Pakistan, which has been the main conduit for arms supplies to the guerrillas during the war, has denied the allegation.

Khost garrison, lying isolated from other government forces about 25 kilometres from the border with Pakistan, has withstood all previous assaults during 12 years of civil war.

The Mujahideen have had few successes in the fight to overthrow the government in Kabul since the last Soviet soldiers withdrew from Afghanistan two years ago.

A major assault on the eastern city of Jalalabad turned into an expensive fiasco, while faction fighting among the Mujahideen groups led to a political and military stalemate.

The capture of one small provincial capital in central Afghanistan last year ended with the victors butchering scores of defenders after they surrendered.

This time Mujahideen and

tribal fighters related to the civilian population of Khost pledged there would be no retribution and guerrilla leader Sibghatullah Mojaddidi formally requested the ICRC to intervene.

Afghan analyst Naim Majroob said the tribal fighters played a key role in the battle for Khost and were vital in persuading the defenders they would survive if they surrendered.

Most ordinary soldiers were to be released within a few days, Mr. Lafrate said, but some officers would stand trial for war atrocities.

Mr. Majroob said the Khost victory would strengthen the hand of the Mujahideen in secret contacts with President Najibullah in Kabul.

The United States, which has been the main provider of arms to the Mujahideen throughout the war, has lost much of its interest in the conflict since the Soviet forces left.

Moscow continues to prop up President Najibullah with arms and economic aid, but it has been negotiating with the United States on a mutual halt to arms shipments.

Pakistan says that it too supports a political settlement to the war. A senior Foreign Ministry official said he hoped Khost's capture could spur the search for peace.

"It will drive home for the other side that they have lost hope that time was on their side. This may break the logjam and I think the prospect for a political accord may brighten up."

Shomron: Iran could pose nuclear threat

TEL AVIV (R) — The outgoing head of Israel's armed forces said Sunday he was certain Iran was working towards nuclear capability which could threaten the Jewish state.

Interviewed on educational television, Lieutenant-General Dan Shomron said the damage done to Iraq's forces in the Gulf war had changed the balance of power in the region and removed a check on Iranian ambitions to spread Islamic revolution.

"I have no doubt that it is developing in the nuclear field, it is also buying long-range missiles," Gen. Shomron said. "We must keep an eye on Iran, it has the potential to threaten us."

In 1989 Iran said it had resumed construction of its Bushehr nuclear power plant, halted after the 1979 revolution but it has denied receiving help from Pakistan to build nuclear weapons.

Iran contributes to hardline Palestinian groups and backs the fundamentalist Shiite Muslim Hizbollah movement which has repeatedly clashed with Israel and its allies in South Lebanon.

Some Israeli security officials also believe that Iranian funds have reached the Islamic Jihad group, fighting Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Iran is some 1,000 km from Israel at its closest, about twice the distance from which Iraq fired its converted missiles into the Jewish state during the Gulf war.

Foreign press reports say Israel has a stockpile of nuclear warheads and the missiles with which to launch them. "I think we have a deterrent against her (Iran), I have no doubt that we have a deterrent," Gen. Shomron said. He gave no details.

New chief takes over

Ehud Barak took office as the Israeli army's chief of staff Monday telling his soldiers to expect "tough times" before peace reigns in the Middle East.

The Israeli-born Barak, 49, who climbed to fame as an undercover commando trooper, replaces Gen. Shomron.

The changeover ceremony was held at Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's office, where the Israeli leader officially promoted Barak to the rank of lieutenant-general and pinned the insignia to his shoulder.

In his parting words, Gen. Shomron alluded to his fight to preserve the ethics of Israeli soldiers through the Palestinian uprising.

Gen. Shomron said he "regarded the Israeli defence forces as more than a sophisticated war machine ... and having a strong sense of purpose and a high level of morality."

Gen. Barak published a written order of the day for the troops saying "on the road to a desired peace the Israeli defence forces still faces tough times ... our forbearance, initiative and strength is what will tilt the balance."

Kirkuk devastated by rebellion

By Wafa Amr
The Associated Press

KIRKUK — Charred bodies lay in the streets. Houses, shops and government buildings are battered by shellfire. But the government is firmly in control of this oil city that was the proudest conquest of Kurdish rebels.

Officials took Western reporters on a 90-minute tour of Kirkuk Sunday, displaying damage they said was caused during the rebel occupation as well as by the fight to reclaim it.

Government officials said it took two hours last Thursday to recapture Kirkuk, a city of 500,000 people located 240 kilometres north of Baghdad. Rebels had taken it on March 19.

The army was clearly in control on Sunday, when reporters spent more than 90 minutes roaming its streets, sometimes without government officials.

Soldiers relaxed in the shade of tanks eating their lunch. An army helicopter flew overhead.

There was no sound of gunfire. Tamim Province Governor Hashem Al Majid said the rebels were at least 50 kilometres away. But the city itself was devastated.

Near the city's entrance lay three bodies, one of a child. Flies swarmed over the bodies, which were burned beyond recognition.

"They were left there because we have no cars left to carry them

and bury them," said Mayor Majid.

Residents said many more people had died inside the city. Ali Hussein, a merchant, said he had seen 500 bodies removed from a downtown side street.

He also said rebels holding the city searched for members of President Saddam Hussein's ruling Baath Party and executed them.

More than a dozen burned cars and trucks, one with a corpse still inside, littered a main street leading to the city centre.

Many houses along the way were burned or partly demolished by what residents said was a fierce but brief battle between the army's tanks and artillery and the rebels' light arms and rocket launchers.

The owner of the Qasr Kirkuk Hotel, who did not give his name, said rebels fired rocket launchers at the Iraqi army from the roof of the hotel.

Most streets were nearly deserted. Residents said many fled residents had when the fighting started, but that some were starting to drift back.

Shops, restaurants, warehouses, hotels, government buildings and schools had been looted and burned, their floors a shambles of shattered glass and burned documents, furniture and equipment.

Sandbags stood before several government buildings, where residents said guards had been gunned down by the guerrillas.

"The guards put up a fierce confrontation, but they were killed," said a man who would not give his name.

One shopkeeper said all the gold in the jewelry market had been stolen during the city's ordeal. Reporters saw empty jewelry boxes on the floors.

Walls throughout the city carried scrawled slogans in Arabic, Kurdish and Farsi, the Iranian tongue.

Some in Arabic lauded President Saddam. Others in Kurdish were anti-government slogans.

One brick wall where President Saddam's portrait once stood had been almost demolished.

Mayor Majid said that as well as Kurds, the rebels included supporters of the monarchy overthrow in the 1950s and Iranian-backed Islamic radicals.

He said some had infiltrated into the city before the rebels captured it on March 19.

The merchant Hussein said he had seen Iranians among the rebels. "I saw one with an Iranian ID and Iranian money," he said.

Iran has denied aiding the rebels, but many Iraqi exiles who had fled to Iran in past years are believed to have returned to join the rebellion.

Mitchell urges U.S. to down Iraqi helicopters

WASHINGTON (R) — The leader of the majority Democrats in the Senate Sunday urged President George Bush to order U.S. forces in the Gulf to shoot down Iraqi helicopters being used by Iraq to attack rebels.

Senate majority leader George Mitchell added his voice to a growing chorus seeking action from U.S. forces that would stop Iraq from using gunships against dissident Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

However, apart from the helicopters Mr. Mitchell backed Mr. Bush's policy of staying out of the fighting in Iraq.

The White House declared last week U.S. forces would take no action to prevent Iraq's government from using helicopters and U.S. officials said Sunday the policy had not changed.

Mr. Bush is under almost no domestic political pressure to intervene directly in the unrest gripping Iraq by supporting either group of insurgents.

Criticism of the president's hands-off policy on Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf war is largely confined to newspaper editorials and scholars on Middle East affairs, many of whom complain that Iraqis repeatedly incited the Iraqis to overthrow the government he should now help those trying to do so.

Mr. Mitchell, a Maine Democrat, echoed the feeling of many in Congress when he said on NBC-TV's "meet the press": "I think the policy of non-intervention generally is a correct one."

However, he added: "I wish they would enforce the original policy of not permitting any aircraft, fixed-wing or helicopter, to operate against the rebels."

"The clear intent at the outset was to prohibit the use of aircraft which might threaten American forces, and that was both fixed-wing and helicopters, from operating against the rebels."

U.S. forces have shot down two Iraqi jets since a temporary ceasefire began on Feb. 28 because they violated a ban on the use of warplanes to which Iraq has agreed. But helicopters being used as gunships have not been shot down.

President Bush, speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, would only say in response to Mr. Mitchell's comments: "Always glad to have his opinion. Glad to hear from him."

Mr. Bush also refused to comment on National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft's two-day Middle East trip last week. The London Sunday Express said the trip was part of an effort to win the release of Western hostages in Lebanon.

General Norman Schwarzkopf, the allied commander in the Gulf, said in a television interview last week he had been "tricked" into allowing the use of Iraqi helicopters over Iraq.

He said Iraqi officers told him the helicopters were needed to transport government officials because so many roads and bridges in Iraq had been destroyed by allied bombing.

White House officials have said U.S. troops will not take sides in Iraq's civil war though they hold a large section of southern Iraq.

"I don't think the United States can intervene in every internal conflict, however despicable the circumstances may be," Mr. Mitchell said.

Mr. Mitchell said he believed Saddam Hussein would eventually be removed as leader of Iraq.

"It's clearly now the view of a large number of Iraqis, certainly the Shiites, who are a majority in the country, the Kurds in the north. I think eventually it has to penetrate the ruling party, which involves his supporters, the Baath Party and others," he asserted.

Asians demand role in post-war Gulf

SEOUL (AP) — Asian and Pacific developing nations should have a role in the Gulf's post-war rehabilitation, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said Monday.

"Any new world order emerging after the Gulf war should not infringe on individual nations' rights," Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqing added at the opening session of the 17th general meeting of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

"It is not only appropriate but indeed vital that this session of the Commission should address the major global issues such as the post-war Gulf rehabilitation and the participation of ESCAP developing nations in the process," Mr. Alatas said.

Mr. Alatas said many developing nations in the ESCAP region suffered during the war because the Gulf was a major source of oil, a growing export market and a major employer.

Due partly to the Gulf war, the economies of many of these nations are expected to grow more slowly this year, probably not matching the average 5.4 per cent growth of 1990, he said.

Mr. Liu said of the post-war world: "Such a new order, in our view, should recognise the right of every country to choose its own social system, ideology, economic mode and course of development in light of its own national conditions."

His remarks were seen as reflecting China's veiled concern about "a pax Americana."

China will continue to build "specialism with Chinese characteristics" and strengthen a market-oriented economic system, he said.

Adherence to reform and opening-up will continue to be China's basic state policy," he added.

He indicated that China would open more of its coastal regions to foreign business, in addition to five special economic zones and 14 coastal cities.

Two U.S. sailors deny Gulf sabotage charges

SUBIC BAY, Philippines (R) — Two American sailors facing a court martial denied Monday they had tried to sabotage a U.S. aircraft carrier during the Gulf war in support of Iraq.

Airman Apprentice Abdul Shaheed, 22, and Seaman Apprentice James Moss, 21, vehemently denied urging shipmates on the Ranger to take the captain hostage on the first day of the war.

"I have never supported Iraq or Saddam Hussein... I have always opposed Saddam Hussein, Iraq and war in general," Moss, from Columbus, Ohio, told a news conference in a cinema at the Subic naval base 80 kilometres northwest of Manila.

Shaheed, from Brooklyn, New York, and previously known as Kevin Brothers, called himself a victim of incredible exaggeration, hysteria and paranoia.

He said he was arrested while praying abroad the ship the night the war started in January.

"I am a quiet guy who likes to keep to myself and pray a lot... I never stopped doing my job and I did nothing but pray for a peaceful solution to the war," he said.

The charge sheet against the two blacks said they "attempted to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny or refusal of duty."

It accused them of "discussing with (a group of other blacks) and seeking their support of actions to hold hostage the ship's commanding officer or executive officer, sabotage of the ship's aircraft catapult launch system and sabotage of the ship's engineering equipment in support of Muslim holy war (jihad) sponsored by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein against the United States."

The date of their court martial is yet to be decided.

The charges carry a maximum penalty of 10 years confinement, dishonourable discharge and reduction in rank.

A third sailor, Danny Roberson, was also questioned but a navy spokesman said initial investigation found insufficient evidence to charge him.

Moss and Shaheed appeared before the press in their naval uniforms. They sat quietly after

reading their statements while their naval counsel, Lieutenant Brendan Ward and Victor Bernson, answered questions.

The two lawyers said nothing at all happened on the Ranger and that the two accused did not commit any physical act.

"Essentially what we are talking about here is disloyal statements. Nothing happened and the two denied that they made the disloyal statements," Bernson said.

The Ranger had about 5,000 men on board. Its captain, Ernest Christensen, ordered Moss, Shaheed and Roberson flown to Subic after their questioning on Jan. 17.

Moss said that before the war he asked to be considered a conscientious objector but still carried out all orders given him.

He added: "I never intended to harm the ship or anyone on the ship. My only wish is to separate from the armed forces because of my religious conviction."

"I truly believe that all of this is happening to me simply because I am a Muslim, Shaheed said. "Just because I am a Muslim, that does not mean that I support Saddam Hussein. I have never supported Saddam Hussein and I also never supported his invasion of Kuwait and his so-called 'holy war' against the United States and the rest of the coalition forces."

He said: "I never urged my shipmates to hold the USS Ranger's captain and executive officer hostage and I never told anyone to sabotage the ship's aircraft catapult launch system and sabotage of the ship's engineering equipment."

"The only reason I am here before you today is because some people on my ship and I guess some back in the U.S. preferred to think that all Muslims are evil. They do not understand Islam, and instead equate all Muslims with Saddam Hussein and his ruthless acts," Shaheed said.

Ward, one of the counsel, said parts of the testimony against the two came from Airman Apprentice Greg Jones, also a black, who said he dreamed the Ranger had sunk and that it was because of activities by Shaheed and Moss.

"In short, Jones is a very confused individual," Ward said.

More than one-quarter of U.S. troops gone from Gulf

RIYADH (AP) — The United States is trying to maintain its withdrawal of roughly 3,000 troops a day from the region while awaiting a permanent ceasefire, military officials say.

More than one-quarter of the American troops have departed and the number remaining has already dropped to under 400,000 from a peak of 540,000, the U.S. central command said.

The U.S. VII corps, up to 100,000 troops, is in occupied Iraq. It will remain until the United Nations approves a formal ceasefire, which could come as early as this week.

The 1st infantry division and the 3rd armoured division are patrolling the demarcation line established by a temporary ceasefire

agreement on March 3. A division usually has between 11,000 and 17,000 troops.

They would be withdrawn from Iraq within a matter of days after a permanent ceasefire is signed, according to Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of U.S. forces in the theatre.

Officials here indicated that the Americans are anxious to get home to avoid being pulled into Iraq's civil war. Such involvement would carry the risk of casualties and could mean a draw-out for presence as an occupying force, plus the responsibility of caring for refugees fleeing the fighting.

These are seen by many in the military as the mistakes of Vietnam, and despite criticism from

some circles, the U.S. government has refused to intervene to help the rebels.

Thousands of civilians are pouring into the American-controlled area seeking food and medical care for their wounds.

There has been no fighting between the Americans and Iraqis, who are eyeball-to-eyeball across the demarcation line.

"I don't think the Iraqi army wants to start a war with us," said Major General Thomas G. Rhame, commander of the 1st infantry division.

U.S. officials said the number of refugees fluctuates. "We're trying to avoid large concentrations," said one official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The

more you provide, the more dependent they get on you. We don't want to establish refugee camps."

Some U.S. troops, including medical and other reservists, have complained about having to stay on duty to guard the demarcation line and treat Iraqi civilians and prisoners of war.

"We'll wait until we get a formal ceasefire, then we'll withdraw," said one military official. "Until then we're obligated to provide humanitarian aid."

Once the Americans leave, the official said, it is hoped that aid organisations under the umbrella of the International Committee of the Red Cross will fill the vacuum.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES	
04:40	Fajr
05:19	(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:39	Dhuhr
15:12	'Asr
17:59	Maghreb
19:18	'Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swedieh	Tel. 810740.
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.	652785, 655326.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terraviva Church Tel. 625366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	625341.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel.	628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.	

711331.	Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261.	
St. Epiphanius Church Tel. 771751.	
Armenian International Church Tel.	685336.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-	Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be warm and dusty and some clouds will appear at different altitudes. Winds will be southeasterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, it will be dusty with northerly moderate winds and calm seas.	
Min/max. temp.	
Amman	12 / 25

Aqaba	16 / 32
Deserts	10 / 24
Jordan Valley	16 / 30
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 24, Aqaba 30. Humidity readings: Amman 28 per cent. Aqaba 20 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Khaldoun Klob	825919
Dr. Fayez Jallouh	624207
Dr. Khalil Abdul Qader	795292
Dr. Ahmad Al Naour	635934
Fine pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	776336

Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Naironkh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	646945
Shmeisat pharmacy	637660
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	

Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	899226
Blood Bank	771221
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	63021
Hotel Complaints	605980
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	757111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101

Abdell Telephone Repair	661101
Jordan Television	775111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	
Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	06-55300
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport	06-55300
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Husseini Medical Centre	812813/22
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn	642816
Al-Jalil Maternity, J. Amn	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	62363
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shroafat	664171/4
Shmeisat Hospital	669131
University Hospital	645

Jordan, Libya discuss trade, economic ties

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian and Libyan teams Monday opened talks here designed to promote trade and economic ties between the two countries and pave the way for the signing of new agreements on trade exchanges.

Ibrahim Badran, the head of the Jordanian side to the talks, emphasised the need for Libya to bolster its trade and economic cooperation, and said that the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Jordan was following a set of plans to achieve that goal.

Saleh Al Sheikhli, who heads the Libyan team, addressed the meeting by underlining the importance for the two sides to exchange visits by officials and businessmen to promote trade, to help achieve economic integration in the Arab World.

Mr. Sheikhli, who is also in charge of import-export operations in Libya, said during his visit to Jordan that he would tour Jordanian industries and examine the prospect of ordering Jordanian products for the Libyan market to replace those imported from foreign countries.

Mr. Ibrahim Badran, who is also Minister of Industry and Trade secretary-general, paid a visit to Libya last month and said that the two countries would be

updating a bilateral trade agreement signed in 1978.

He said that during his four-day visit to Libya he had discussed various economic and trade issues with Libyan officials and had toured production centres.

The two sides are expected to reach agreement on setting up Jordanian and Libyan trade centres in Tripoli and Amman and to organise joint trade exhibitions in the two capitals to promote the sale of national products in either country, Mr. Badran added.

He said that initial agreement was reached with Libya on businessmen from the two sides meeting and discussing the prospect of launching joint ventures.

He said that Jordanian products were popular in Libyan markets and that several products, like chemicals, iron and steel had a good market in Jordan.

According to Mr. Badran, full agreements between the two sides can only be signed by the Joint Jordanian Libyan Higher Committee during its meeting in Amman later this month.

The Libyan team, which is to spend several days in Jordan for talks, will also tour a number of economic and trade centres and industrial projects around the country.

Recent rainstorm unprecedented in 30 years

AMMAN (J.T.) — The rainstorm which hit Jordan on March 22 brought in quantities of rain to the southern regions of Jordan unprecedented in 30 years, according to the Director of the Department of Meteorology Ali Abanda.

Mr. Abanda said that the rainstorm, which caused widespread destruction of public and private property, brought in 240 millimetres of rain in some areas of the Karak, Maan and Tafila governorates, nearly four times the annual average amounts of rain fall.

Meanwhile, repair teams are reported hard at work in the

stricken regions mending roads and bridges and restoring water and telephone services.

Apart from the Ministry of Public Works, groups of local contractors have been asked to participate in the road repair work which, according to local officials, would take two more weeks to complete.

Khaled Bawazir, acting governor of Tafila, toured various sites where work is going on and was told that Water and Irrigation Ministry teams had been supplying water to the region through a temporary network because the main system was still under repair.

League of the Red Cross, Red Crescent appeals for aid for Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — The League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva has issued an appeal to various nations to ensure the sum of 30 million Swiss francs to help finance relief supplies for the Iraqi people, victim of the Gulf war.

An appeal by Par Stenback, general secretary for the League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said that the sum was needed for the purchase of urgent supplies of food and medicine which will be channelled through the Iraqi National Red Crescent Society.

Mr. Stenback said that the raids on Iraq had caused wide scale devastation of its infrastructure and the sanctions imposed on Iraq, for its occupation of Kuwait, brought about the depletion of the stored food supplies and essential requirements, for the Iraqi people.

Mr. Stenback's appeal was issued in light of a report by Abdul Halim Sanousi, a league envoy who visited Iraq in order to determine the needs of the people there in the wake of the Gulf war.

Mr. Sanousi, who was accom-

panied on the tour by representatives from the Iraqi National Red Crescent Society, submitted a detailed report to the Geneva headquarters about the present situation in Iraqi cities, according to a spokesman for the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) which is now basing Mr. Sanousi.

He said that Mr. Sanousi would have talks with JNRCS officials on ways to streamline the process of sending relief supplies to Baghdad through Amman.

Mr. Sanousi met with Dr. Mohammad Muflih Al Hadid, JNRCS vice-president, and discussed with him the prospect of opening an office for the league in Amman and another one in Baghdad to help carry out relief of operations.

According to the JNRCS, the president of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has entrusted Mr. Bassam Al Hadid with supervising the league's mission in Baghdad. Mr. Bassam Al Hadid has, to date, served as director of the evacuee camps operated by the JNRCS in Jordan.

Iraqi relief group appeals for world humanitarian help

AMMAN (R) — A top Iraqi aid official complained of slow world response in offering humanitarian assistance to his war-blasted country and warned that epidemics could spread across its frontiers.

"I appeal to world humanitarian agencies to play a bigger role in assisting the Iraqi people and to speed up this process," Ameer Khaled Abdul Hamid, head of foreign relations at the Iraqi Red Crescent, told Reuters on Monday.

"If we compare the help they offered to other disaster and war areas in recent history, we feel that their assistance to Iraq, in view of the level of destruction caused during the war, is well below the need," he said.

"They have to move quickly because a spread of epidemics, coupled with malnutrition among many children and lack of medicines and vaccines, could, God forbid, lead to the spread of diseases that will not only affect Iraq, but also nearby countries," he added.

A United Nations report last month said the U.S.-led coalition bombed Iraq back to the pre-industrial age during the six-week war.

It said the country of 18 million people needed huge quantities of staple foods, fuel and other emergency supplies to avert starvation and disease. It also needs energy, to preserve and distribute food and medicines,



Dr. Khaled Abu Rumman (right), head of the Chest Diseases Department at the Ministry of Health, Monday is interviewed by a Petra reporter on tuberculosis in Jordan (Petra photo)

Ministry of Health plans to eradicate tuberculosis

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Health Ministry last year discovered 301 tuberculosis cases in the Kingdom, 39 of them being non-Jordanians working in the country. The total number of tuberculosis cases under treatment was 540, according to Dr. Khaled Abu Rumman, head of the ministry's Chest Diseases Department.

However, thanks to an intensive plan that has been in force since 1983, the number of cases continues to drop, said Abu Rumman in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Monday.

"The Health Ministry's plan, which has been implemented in two stages, has targeted groups more susceptible to tuberculosis, like children, and the ministry has gone a long way towards eradicating the disease in Jordan," Abu Rumman explained.

"During the first stage of the plan (1983-1988) the ministry succeeded in reducing the spread of the disease to less than one per cent for the six-year age group, while immunisation was continuing for all citizens," Abu Rumman said.

During the second five-year stage of the plan, which is still going on, the Health Ministry last year succeeded in reducing the rate of tuberculosis infection to half per cent, down from 0.8 per cent in 1982.

"In the second phase of the plan, the ministry aims at covering the 14-year age group, at bringing down the rate of infection among them to less than one per cent, and at inducing immunisation to nearly 90 per cent of the first elementary class students in private and government

schools," Abu Rumman said.

"The process of discovering new cases of tuberculosis is conducted in two forms and in the course of the Ministry of Health's determined move to bring about 100 per cent cure to those infected by the disease," Abu Rumman said.

The Health Ministry concentrates its search among the aged, inhabitants of densely populated areas, worker groups who mingle with the non-Jordanian workers, workers in restaurants, hotels and hairdressers.

"On the other hand, the ministry conducts continuous checking and examination of persons referred to hospitals by health centres and of non-Jordanians arriving here for work," Abu Rumman added.

He said that last year registered a decline in the number of those infected by tuberculosis as fewer non-Jordanian workers arrived in the recent years, and also as a result of the Health Ministry's strenuous efforts to deal with the disease and eradicate it from Jordan.

Dr. Abu Rumman said that the health centres in the Kingdom last year provided immunisation against tuberculosis to nearly 67,000 pupils. Also in the course of the anti-tuberculosis plan, the health centres last year took nearly 82,000 X-ray pictures.

The Health Ministry's health centres around the Kingdom offer free treatment against the disease although an integrated course of the treatment of one case costs at least JD 50, Abu Rumman said.

He said that the five-year plans are expected to continue until eradication has been achieved.

Hope of quick withdrawals from Kuwaiti banks set back

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Expatriates' hopes that they would be able to withdraw their savings and deposits in Kuwaiti banks following Iraq's withdrawal from the emirate have suffered a serious setback as it has become clear that the Kuwaiti government only plans to allow limited and conditional withdrawals from the accounts for some months to come; and outward transfers are not permitted at all.

"I have left behind over 40,000 Kuwaiti dinars in three banks in Kuwait," said a Jordanian engineer who returned to Amman in October, three months after the Iraqis entered Kuwait. "I was hoping that I would be able to issue a cheque and withdraw the money, but I am now told that I have to be personally present in Kuwait, and I would be allowed to withdraw around 2,000 dinars a month," said the engineer agreeing to be identified only as Akram.

Banking officials said there was very little communication with

Kuwaiti banks and it appeared that there was a standing regulation which demanded that the account holder or an immediate family member should be personally present to make withdrawals. Exception to this rule is made to Kuwaiti passport holders.

"We have been informed that the Central Bank of Kuwait is not authorising any foreign transfers from expatriates' accounts in Kuwaiti banks," said a senior executive at a Jordanian bank. According to this executive, withdrawals are limited to 2,000 dinars per account per month, but some others said the limit was 4,000 dinars.

Mohammad, another expatriate, said he had sent a cheque through a non-Arab to be cashed at a Kuwaiti bank, but the withdrawal was not allowed.

"They will not grant me permission to return to Kuwait and they will not permit cashing of a cheque through another person," he lamented. "What am I supposed to do?"

Many Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates left Kuwait dur-

ing the seven-month Gulf crisis with little cash with them. Those who maintained accounts outside Kuwait were lucky since the freezing of all foreign accounts of residents of Kuwait ordered by the U.N. was lifted last month.

A senior official said the Jordanian government was following up the issue, but there was little hope of an immediate breakthrough to enable the tens of thousands of expatriates now in the Kingdom to recover their savings and deposits.

No definite figure is available on the actual amount held in deposit and saving accounts of Jordanian expatriates in Kuwait. Some reports have put the figure at around \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion.

A report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) — a United Nations Agency — estimated that Jordanian expatriates had lost about \$4 billion in bank accounts and assets in Kuwait.

Many Jordanians have been living in Kuwait for decades, and what they lost represents life savings.

"I think sooner or later the Kuwaiti authorities will permit full withdrawals," said a banking official. "Right now, they are apparently trying to assess the situation and are hesitant to allow any big amounts to leave the country."

One of the first announcements made by the Kuwaiti monetary authorities following the end of the Gulf war in early March said all emirates — deposit or withdrawal — made in any account in any bank in Kuwait since Aug. 2 were considered null and void and banks would deal with its clients as if the accounts were frozen as of Aug. 2.

"This may be to the advantage of some people who managed to withdraw part of their money during the crisis," said Mohammad. "But a majority of the expatriates left behind huge sums in the banks with hopes that full withdrawals would be allowed at some point in time. Until then there is little people like me can do other than hoping that we can withdraw our money sooner than later."

Boston University conducts study on Gulf war environmental impact

AMMAN (J.T.) — The devastation wrought by the Gulf war on the environment of the region will be assessed by Boston University geologist Farouk Al Baz next month when he directs a scientific fact-finding mission to the area.

Appointed by the Third World Academy of Sciences, Mr. Al Baz is leading a team to survey the immediate and long-term impact on the atmosphere from the soot and sulphur emissions from oil well fires, on the Gulf water, marine life and beaches from oil spills, and on land from the digging of trenches and berms as well as disturbances to the desert surface from military operations in the region.

Mr. Al Baz discusses the possible environmental impacts of the war in the current issue of Science (March 8, 1991). He says that the breakup of the desert surface will likely cause sand storms and the formation of new dune fields, which will threaten roads, airports, and even whole communities.

The Egyptian-born expert on remote sensing has studied the impact of war on land in the Sinai Peninsula following the conflict of 1973 and on the Persian Gulf waters from oil spills that resulted from the Iran-Iraq war. He is now gathering preliminary information from scientists located in the region in preparation for his field studies next month.

Rebellion

(Continued from page 1)

fighting in them. They just want food, water, shelter, peace and quiet," another U.S. officer said. U.S. officers said Basra and other southern towns were now surrounded by tanks after Iraqi troops used helicopter gunships and heavy artillery to regain control.

The Egyptian construction workers said the Shiite rebels had weapons from Iran and were backed by Iranian fighters. "Some of them had the green headbands like the Iraqis of the (1978 Islamic) revolution," Magdy Mohammad said.

Al Sadeq, an Egyptian from Basra, described the rebels as saboteurs and looters. "They had no form of coordination, chain of command or a view on how to control the city."

Sadeq said bombing by the United States and its allies during the Gulf war had damaged several public service buildings in Basra while the rebels had gutted schools, hospitals and shops.

Rebels and refugees said on Friday that Samawa, on the Euphrates River, had become the last rebel-held southern town to fall to Iraqi troops.

Kuwait's Red Crescent and the International Red Cross set up a new camp inside Kuwaiti territory on Sunday to cope up with refugees waiting for permission to reenter the emirate, for political asylum or access to a third country.

On Monday, reporters could hear the sound of explosions to northwest of Safwan where U.S. experts detonated scores of Iraqi mines in the desert.

University for girls stirs controversy, but is generally accepted

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The National University for Girls in Amman is expected to open its doors to girls only, in September. After a thorough study conducted by specialists, the need to build a first scientific institution for girls was evident. However, since its announcement, peoples opinion appears divided.

The question is: Is it necessary to have a segregated university? Dr. Amin Abdullah Mahmoud, chairman of the national university maintained that the decision to build the university stemmed from a "need for an effective and logical substitute of foreign universities by

responding to the academic and scientific needs of the Jordanian and Arab women in the country." In this manner, Dr. Mahmoud said, "it would solve the problem of providing higher education for our girls and for sending them abroad."

The aims of the university, according to Dr. Mahmoud, are to promote the girls' qualifications in both the technical and scientific fields, to graduate and educate Arab women, and to provide for higher education for expatriate Arab girls who are deprived of these opportunities abroad.

Toujan Faisal, a leading woman activist, pointed out that "university education is not just about gathering information, but it is a social experience and part of growing up."

Mrs. Faisal, who does not agree with segregated universities, reasoned: "It would be very damaging to separate the two sexes because they are not sepa-

rated in real life. We have made this into a taboo that must be broken. We have to start thinking of each other as human beings."

In the 1970s, Mrs. Faisal had a programme about women and work. At that time, women were encouraged to work, she recalled. "I met many conservative parents who did not believe in working women, but they had to agree to it for economic reasons," Mrs. Faisal told the Jordan Times.

"The fact that their own daughters went to work in a mixed environment, however, changed the parents' minds who admitted that it was a good experience and it was very natural for the two sexes to meet."

Other parents do not get convinced so easily. "If I cannot send my daughters to an all girls university, I will not send them at all. Women are supposed to be protected. They get educated and then they get married," an elderly father of three daughters said. The majority of the people interviewed by the Jordan Times preferred not to send their daughters to a mixed university for similar reasons.

"Because of this, we decided to build the university," Dr. Mahmoud said. "The programme entails a Bachelor of Arts degree in medical services and administration, social sciences and the arts fields," Dr. Mahmoud added.

New specialities, after the first phase, will be manufacturing of medicine and general pharmaceuticals, simultaneous translation in English, library administration and a degree in executive secretariat, he added.

The university will also accommodate at its hostels up to 1500 students. Dr. Mahmoud said

that there would be an activities centre, a club, a reading room, music and sports facilities. Though the university will open in September, about 1,000 students will be accepted in the first phase. "The university is expected to be finalised by 1994," he added.

"Many girls will attend the university. The students who are not allowed to attend mixed universities now have an opportunity to get educated," Susan Darwazeh, director of Jordan Television commercials section and specialist in theatre and drama said. "Although it is healthier to be in a mixed environment, one cannot deny the way society is built," she added.

"There is nothing wrong in having an all girls school," Gulo Sati, a mother of two said. "People should have choices. Even the most advanced countries have segregated schools." Mrs. Sati believes girls will have more complex, such as being shy and thinking that the other sex is alien, "but there should be all kinds of schools," she told the Jordan Times.

Fathers are also divided into two. There are those who welcome the idea as a relief: "Now my daughter can have a degree. She will be very happy," said Mr. Aref, a middle aged father interviewed by the Jordan Times, but there are other fathers — who say: "I would not send my children to a segregated school. I want them to grow up with confidence in themselves."

People in the end, however, always said: "One cannot argue with society. One has to have choices; a bit of everything," echoing the make up of the Jordanian society.

Bishara

(Continued from page 1)

On the pro-Iraqi stand taken by PLO Chairman Yassar Arafat, Mr. Bishara said: "Mr. Arafat took a very reckless course of action and will have to bear the consequences."

There was no official reaction from Jordan. A PLO spokesman said on Sunday the group deeply regretted the move which he said would demoralise Palestinians living under Israeli occupation.

Both Jordan and the PLO have not received any financial aid from the Gulf states since August.

The GCC states had long been the PLO's main financial backers and also provided tens of millions of dollars of aid to Jordan.

Albania

(Continued from page 1)

3,000 supporters at an impromptu rally outside party headquarters that "there will be no coalition" with the Communists, as Mr. Alla had suggested two days before the vote.

"Yesterday, he marked not a Democratic victory, but a victory for democracy," the other party leader, Gramoz Pashko, said. "The Communists who sucked our blood for 16 years are finished. Within two months they will be in pieces."

Ministry segregates sexes

AMMAN (AP) — Jordan's social development minister, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, has segregated male and female employees at his ministry, citing Islamic rules on interaction between the sexes.

"He told us that when a man and a woman meet, the devil keeps them company," a disgruntled woman employee said Monday, quoting Youssef Al Athem, the minister of social development, as saying in announcing the measure last week.

Mr. Athem was not available for comment, but both men and women employees of the ministry confirmed his order to separate the sexes.

Islamists entered the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran two months ago in a reshuffle aimed at placating the influential Muslim Brotherhood movement two years after it won 22 seats at the 80-man Lower House of Parliament.

Mr. Athem's action is the latest of several steps that have worried progressives who fear the spread of fundamentalist values in what used to be a western-oriented country.

"Instead of moving forward, leaving these ideas behind us, we are moving backward," said a woman worker at the ministry, insisting on anonymity.

Education Minister Abdallah Aqayleh, a Brotherhood member, has banned male sports teachers from instructing female students in state schools. Like Mr. Athem's action, this falls under the Islamic tradition forbidding women to appear in front of men, even relatives, unless they are veiled.

Islamist deputies in Parliament have submitted a proposal to ban coeducation in all schools, community colleges and universities in the country. The proposal has not been discussed because the Parliament has recessed for a summer break.

Muslim fundamentalists vowed during the 1989 election campaign to introduce strict Islamic laws, ban alcohol and "indecent" television programmes, and close down night clubs in this predominantly Muslim state.

But so far, they have only succeeded in banning alcohol aboard flights on the national airline to Arab and Islamic countries.

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Anti-social development

THE DEVIL, made of unseen material, has always been seen as the supreme spirit of evil and a leader of all apostate angels. Being deprived of a certain abode, he chooses the most weird and loathsome of places in which to play his tricks and practise his wickedness. In fact the devil resides everywhere; not least in the soul of each human being. To lock a man and a woman in a room and suspect the devil will be there is plausible. But if the two are working in an office, providing services to the people, then the devil's presence must be somewhat in question. Thus, the decision by the most honourable Minister of Social Development to segregate sexes at his ministry can only be viewed as a step backward in a country that for decades has been striving to realise equality between the sexes. Segregation, after all, is a form of racism. Moreover, it is an offence against people's basic rights as equals in the workplace as well as in the eyes of the law. The respected minister's argument that the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, had ordained segregation is not entirely true. Women during the early days of Islam not only mingled with men and did what men did, they even fought alongside them in battle. The prophet preached modesty and chastity in appearance and in intentions, two qualities that no forced segregation can enforce. What is more dangerous than the issue of segregation is the call by many fundamentalists to bar women from work altogether. That would take Jordan or any other place for that matter back into the dark ages; and we need not look far around us to see how awful the situation of women in so-called conservative societies really is.

There are many ways to keep the devil out. But segregation alone is certainly not one of them. If anything, evil can find more fertile ground in wretchedness, ignorance and deprivation.

In fact, it can be argued that socially at least, more open societies have done better than closed ones. A relatively devil-free, healthy life does not base itself on old myths. It only develops in societies of equality, authenticity and highly intellectual life. Besides, wrong are those who claim higher moral authority for themselves and not others, regardless of who they are.

Were those men and women at the ministry asked if they wanted to mingle or separate? Have we not, at this late hour, discovered that authoritarianism only brings disaster? And that the road to salvation does not lie in restricting personal freedoms and human rights?

The government of Mr. Mudar Badran has a duty to upgrade the performance of ministers or officials who are not contributing to improving the quality of life in the Kingdom.

It has a greater responsibility still to rein in those who are starting a slide. The last thing our social development needs is someone who is unaware that segregation is wrong, counterproductive and an obstacle to our progress.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily newspaper Monday launched a bitter attack on the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for their attitude towards the Arab World in general and Jordan and the PLO in particular. These countries' decision to suspend aid to Jordan and the PLO is a true expression of their hostile attitude towards the other Arab and Muslims, and towards democracy and Arab unity, said the paper. Indeed this attitude falls in line with these Arab countries' expression of admiration for Israel which is also hostile to the Arabs and Muslims, the paper continued. The GCC countries had imagined that the little aid which they used to offer Jordan and the Palestinians was something that they doled out to the two parties as an act of charity; and they seem to forget that the financial assistance came in implementation of Arab League summit resolutions which called for bolstering the Jordanian-Palestinian stand in the face of Israel's expansionist aims in other Arab countries and the oil wealth of the Arab World. We believe that the GCC decision is indeed an American decision, aimed at exercising pressure on the Jordanians and Palestinians to succumb to the will of the Zionists because the GCC decision came close to the heels of a U.S. Senate decision to suspend all forms of assistance to Jordan, the paper added. The GCC countries' decision did not cause us any pain, because we consider these countries' attitude as pathetic, now that they are exposed as enemies of Arabs and Muslims and friends of the Zionist enemy and its allies. The paper said that one should not be surprised now of the GCC countries' expressed readiness to finance the construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian land.

When we heard that the Arab League is holding a meeting in Cairo attended by all Arab countries last Saturday, we were filled with renewed hope that after all the Arab leaderships would mend fences and embark on meaningful work towards genuine reconciliation, said Sawt Al Shaah daily Monday. Indeed, such meeting opened the door for all these Arab countries to take stock, and revise their position in a bid to end differences and unify ranks to safeguard the higher Arab national interests, the paper continued. But soon the meeting broke up without any result, driving Arab masses towards feelings of further frustration and despair, the paper added. The Arab delegates did not even discuss the items on the Arab League council's agenda and did not care to turn their attention to the serious and devastating consequences of the Gulf war so that they would embark on reconstruction, the paper noted. The Arab masses had hoped that the Arab League countries would stand firm in the face of the U.S.-Zionist conspiracy and would announce their determination to back Iraq's endeavours to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, but nothing of this kind happened, the paper said. It said despite the failure of the meeting to achieve any result, the Arab masses can still hope that the potential of the Arab Nation is far from being lost, and there will come a day when the Arabs will place their national interests above all other considerations.

Iraq crushes rebellion with consent of antagonists

By Alistair Lyon
Reuters

DAMASCUS — President Saddam Hussein seems to have all but crushed Kurdish and Shiite uprisings which blossomed after Iraq's Gulf war defeat. Lack of outside help appears to have brought their collapse. The United States and its partners in the coalition which drove the Iraqi army from Kuwait on Feb. 28 have given no substantial aid to Iraqi dissidents seeking to overthrow 22 years of Baathist rule.

A month after the uprising was sparked by anti-Saddam riots in the southern city of Basra, reports from Iraq on Monday signalled the virtual end of the most serious challenge to Saddam's rule since his party came to power in 1968.

"The Americans haven't got an alternative to Saddam," a Gulf diplomat in the Syrian capital said. "The Kurds cannot rule all of Iraq and the Saudis and Gulf states don't want the Shiites in power. So it's better for all sides to drain each other's strength in fighting."

Shiite Muslims captured a belt of southern cities, stretching from the Gulf port of Basra to the holy shrines of Najaf and Karbala, following the chaotic Iraqi retreat from Kuwait.

Soon afterwards, Kurdish Peshmarga guerrillas seized a big swathe of the mountainous heart-

land in northern Iraq from weakened and demoralised government troops.

Iran, neutral in the Gulf war, was used as a conduit for smuggled small arms to the Shiites. It let Shiite Iraqi exiles in Iran go home to fight the Iraqi army but kept out of the fighting.

The Iraqi rebels appear to have received little help from anyone else.

Initially the Iraqi leadership concentrated on quelling the Shiites, allowing the Kurds a free hand to capture Zakho, Sulaimaniya, Irbil and the major oil centre of Kirkuk. At one point rebel forces even threatened Mosul, Iraq's third biggest city. But after crushing the southern rebellion, the army last week turned to the Kurds.

The troops counter-attacked hard with tanks, helicopter gunships, artillery and, by rebel accounts, planes against lightly-armed and ill-coordinated Kurds.

By the weekend, Baghdad had announced the capture of Kirkuk, Irbil and Dohuk, and on Monday a Damascus spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) acknowledged that rebels had made a "tactical withdrawal" from the three cities.

Later in the day Baghdad announced the capture of the strategic border town of Zakho and the nearby border crossing of Habur, effectively cutting off the Kurds' main escape route to Turkey.

The rebels say Iraqi shelling has inflicted untold civilian casualties and accuse the Iraqi troops of genocide.

Foreign correspondents with the rebels say many thousands of Kurds have fled the fighting into the mountains and towards Turkey and Iran.

Kurds complained to Western correspondents that U.S. President George Bush had urged Iraqis to rise against Saddam but then did nothing to help them when he counter-attacked, the BBC's Jim Muir reported from north Iraq.

Bush set his face against backing his exhortation with practical assistance to the rebel cause.

His decision to bail the 100-hour allied ground offensive which drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait allowed Iraqi Republican Guard units to flee north with scores of tanks and artillery pieces later used to crush internal dissent.

The United States has shot down two Iraqi planes flying in violation of a provisional Feb. 28 Gulf ceasefire, but has not prevented the Iraqis from deploying helicopters against rebels.

"Bush wants to avoid being accused of interfering in Iraq's internal affairs," said a Western diplomat in Damascus. "The Europeans may have sympathy for the Kurds but only the Americans could help them with missiles or whatever they need."

Washington's hands-off policy

also stems from concern about the impact of any break-up of Iraq on Middle East stability.

Iraq's Arab neighbours fear the emergence of any radical fundamentalist Shiite state in southern Iraq which would strengthen the influence of Iran in the Gulf and beyond.

Turkey, fighting Kurdish guerrillas who want independence for an estimated 10 million Turkish Kurds, is in touch with Iraqi rebels, who say independence is not on their agenda.

But Ankara, while wanting Saddam's downfall, has vowed to abort any nascent Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

Syria and Iran, which also have Kurdish minorities of their own, have repeatedly stressed support for Iraq's territorial integrity.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, who nurtures an old feud with Saddam, says he favours his replacement by a coalition of 17 Kurdish, Shiite, Sunni and other Iraqi opposition parties.

Assad has let dissidents open information offices in his capital, but kept a distance from them. They moved the venue of last month's opposition congress from Damascus to Beirut.

The Gulf diplomat said secular Syria, despite its valued alliance with Iran, would not want Tehran-backed Iraqi Shiites to gain undue power on the doorstep of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. "Syria will not let Iran rule Iraq," he said.

No brokerage in the Middle East regional security

By Nurver Nures

The writer is Turkey's ambassador to the U.K. The article is reprinted from The Independent

THE firm stand Turkey took during the Gulf crisis and the full support she gave to the U.N. coalition forces are already events of the past. We are all thankful that the war is over. However, building a lasting peace is often more taxing than winning a war. This is the challenge that lies ahead.

The immediate task is to ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq. This is essential for the region's future stability. Turkey's own position on the inviolability of Iraqi territory is unequivocal. The Turkish government is pleased to note that both Iran and Syria are also committed to maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity.

In the past, the Middle East has confounded the hopes of those who believed that merely by winning battles they could establish a lasting peace. The repercussions of the coalition victory go far beyond attempting to introduce or even impose blueprints for a new security order in the region. The security arrangements that maintained international peace for decades have recently become anachronisms.

The disbandment of the Warsaw Pact and the continuing review of NATO's role in a "new world order" prove the point. Thus, a new security arrangement for the Middle East should not be inspired by the past, nor imposed from outside. Instead, the countries of the region must be the architects of a new Middle Eastern security order.

In this process, outside powers should indeed offer constructive ideas and support so that the effort should be concerted, but there should be no attempt at brokerage.

In achieving this objective, priority should be given to those countries in the region that are widely exposed to threats; namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states whose security must be enhanced. These states should constitute the nucleus of new security arrangements. Outside powers should lead support to deter future aggressors — but only with the consent of the GCC states. But, it is very important that security arrangements thus centred on the GCC do not revive past intraregional differences. In this respect, the flow of arms into the region that occurred in recent years must stop, and the trade in weapons of all kinds, including those of mass destruction, must be strictly controlled.

A change is also needed in the way outside powers approach the problems of the Middle East. It is not an exaggeration to say that the region was shocked into the twentieth century by the accident of huge oil wealth. In the past, outside powers have largely treated the Middle East as a convenient source of energy and a lucrative market for the sale of large quantities of advanced military equipment. This pursuit of self-interest has turned the Middle East into an arena where foreign powers settle their accounts. The situation has not been helped by the behaviour of various states in the region. This must end; in future, we must allow the Middle East, just like any other region, to chart its own future course and develop its own political identity, with due respect to international norms of conduct and international law.

This brings us to the critical issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Turkey's position on this question has always been clear. Turkey was among the first countries to recognise the independence of the state of Palestine and to support the right of the Palestinians to their own sovereign territory. Indeed, all the states in the

region are entitled to live behind secure and recognised borders. In this respect, Turkey sees it as an obligation on the part of the states of the Middle East, as well as outside powers, to find a solution to the Lebanese crisis. Foreign powers should leave the Lebanon free to determine its own destiny. Turkey would accept any forum in which the concerned parties could agree to address the Middle East conflict and is ready, as in the past, to make available its contribution.

The Western experience of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) may provide future negotiators in the Middle East with some useful ideas. I do not mean by this that the CSCE process should be superimposed on the region. However, the basic tenets of the CSCE, covering politics, economics and social and cultural measures, can be adapted to help lay the cornerstones of cooperation and understanding in the region. There is, of course, no magic formula to resolve in a matter of just a few months a series of bitter disputes that has been raging for decades. But the point is to begin a process and send a message to the Middle East that the international community is determined to help the region in addressing its problems. This matter could be advanced within the Islamic Conference Organisation after formulation of initial strategy by a special working party. Such measures, modelled on the CSCE, would complement each other.

In the political arena, the wave of democracy that only very recently swept across Eastern Europe will inevitably extend to the Middle East. Once the democratic process gains ground in the region, ensuring greater mass participation in government, political polarisation caused by the whims of individual rulers will be replaced by the natural instinct of people to benefit from peaceful intraregional economic, political and social-cultural cooperation.

Even before the Gulf war, Turkey had taken initiatives in this context that are worth recalling. First, at the Islamic Conference in Amman in 1988, it was Turkey that suggested the establishment of a system of confidence- and security-building measures covering the entire Islamic world. A restricted group of wise men was formed for this purpose. It is time to take this proposal seriously and encourage its development.

Second, we must create a network of economic relations within the region. This would involve promoting common economic interests through multilateral joint ventures and schemes that transcend national boundaries. One hopes this will eventually create the right conditions for the free movement of peoples, goods and services across frontiers. In order to build such an infrastructure, the establishment of an "economic fund" or a "regional bank" would be required to supply the necessary financing. The funds will have to come primarily from the oil-producing countries of the region, with voluntary contributions from other wealthier states outside the region. This in turn will help enhance political, economic, social and cultural contacts — in fact, the very spirit of CSCE.

Lastly, we must overcome the prevailing confusion in the West about the nature of Islam before it acquires dangerous proportions. Islam as a religion should be distinguished from the Muslim as an individual. There can be good Muslims and bad Muslims just as there can be good Christians and bad ones. The people of the Middle East have the right to live by the teachings of Islam, which in its proper practice is a great religion reflecting the tenets of Judaism and Christianity. The West must abandon its prejudice on this question.

LETTERS

Defend principles

To the Editor:

I have come to the Hashemite Kingdom without knowledge or will to learn of the language people speak. Notwithstanding this limitation, I am aware that U.S. President George Bush's most recently cited expressions include an unfortunate double entendre: people here feel they should have some concern because George Bush is "still calling the shots, still in power." They may not know how to say this to him, but Arabs are conscious that he is not their president.

As Mr. Bush is head of my state, so he has sworn to uphold and defend the constitution, even though this includes a Bill of Rights.

Mary H. Hall,
Y.W.C.A. Hostel
P. O. Box 5014
Amman.

Face to face with President Bush

Mired from hips to lips in the Middle East

Hello. My name is Abdullah Hassant. I am a Jordanian journalist. A couple of nights ago, I thought up a story for April fool's day. But the newspaper would not publish for me, contending that it might get picked up by an idiotic wire news agency back or something, and might thus elicit a denial from the White House. Last night, a compromise was struck: the newspaper would carry my story but only after this note was pasted right above it.

In an interview with Mr. George Bush, the U.S. president seemed reconciliatory when he said he thought Jordanian journalists "were sensible, professional and clean."

In the exclusive interview, the American president dismissed earlier remarks about Jordanian journalists, attributed to him in a March 8 interview with Arab journalists, as "taken out of context."

"I certainly wouldn't accuse journalists of acting as magicians and being corrupt," the president said. "I know what it takes to make a good story; lots of haste and ass-kissing — pardon me," Mr. Bush said at his oval office in the White House.

He revealed that he "honestly understood" all the attacks made against him by Jordanian columnists and writers, but especially by Al Ra'i's Badr Abdul Haq. "I can understand the guy. Folks like him express profound feelings and sentiments; never mind the rhetoric" the president said.

Asked what he thought of Abdul Haq's call for boycotting American goods and the overwhelming support it received in Jordan, the president paused for a second and said: "Well, thank God it was only limited to Jordan. Otherwise (the boycott) would have affected our grain exports. That is why we opted for a quick war; otherwise such campaigns would adversely have affected our economy."

Asked to comment on perceptions that prevailed in Jordan during the crisis, especially those related to the Iraqi military and the outcome of the war, Mr. Bush said that even though he could not read Arabic, he was fascinated by the headlines. "I seldom see 8-column headlines," he said, "and especially in so much red. It must have reflected the hot mood of the public." But the president did not blame the Jordanian writers and columnists for what he thought was "exaggeration." "Most of the stuff about Iraq's hidden power originated at this (U.S.) end," the president admitted. We leaked it to our media, and your press did the translation and the blowing up of course."

Asked about cartoons, the president said he particularly liked Al Dustour Jalal Rifai's portrayal of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. "Kind of Rambo, Rambo a la Arab, you might say," said the president. However, Mr. Bush did not like all the blood and skulls in the cartoons. "Come on guys, be more subtle," he urged. "You don't have to make a



point." The president, however, admitted that this was a media war. "I agree with (Al Ra'i) chief editor Mahmoud Al Kayed that this was a war won in the first place by the media," he said.

He added that while the Western media could only report whatever information made available by his administration and the U.S. military, the Arab media could publish any story they wanted, from whatever source. "In a way, yours were a freer media," the president acknowledged with a wink.

Asked if he wanted to address any message to Arab journalists or Arabs in general, the president hesitated, but

finally said: "Oh, not really. Last time I did something like this, I was misquoted and taken out of context." In a lengthy answer to a question, the president recalled the history of the Gulf crisis, the American resolve to confront the "aggressor" and the coalition's remarkable success in the war.

"You Arabs must understand that we want nothing from you. Someone said the West wants your oil, this is true. But you need to sell the 'God damn thing'; if not, we'll come and get it. So my message is: get this into your mind. Read my lips and hips. Give us the oil and we'll give you the peace."

هذا من الجول

Graf beats Seles in hardcourt final

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Steffi Graf took a step toward regaining the top women's tennis ranking with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over top-ranked Monica Seles to claim the U.S. Women's Hardcourt Championship title for the third time.

It was Graf's first tournament victory since November's Virginia Slims of New England and her first over Seles since 1989.

Graf, ranked no. 2 in the world, had last met Seles in the 1990 French Open final, which Seles won 7-6, 6-4. Graf improved her career lead over Seles to 4-2.

Seles, 17, ascended to the no. 1 world ranking on March 11 after Graf's record reign of 186 weeks. Because the U.S. Women's Hardcourt Championship is only a 32-player draw, Graf will not overtake Seles in the computer rankings.

But Graf, 21, acknowledged that she hoped her victory Sunday would be a turning point. "I think I'm on the right way now," a smiling Graf said. "I think I made shots, failing to step into her shots and netting many of them on the way to losing two service games and falling behind 4-1 in the first set. But she stormed back in the sixth game to break Seles' service at love.

Two games later, Graf broke Seles again to even the match at 4-4 and won the first set with a third service break. The set ended with a lob by Graf that landed on the baseline.

Both players started the second set by holding their serve, but Graf got a crucial service break to take a 4-2 lead. Seles had missed a break-point opportunity at 2-2 when Graf hit a volley putaway at the net. Seles had another break opportunity in the seventh game, but a Graf service ace at deuce followed by a down-the-line winner gave her a 5-2 lead.

Graf put the second set back on serve in the ninth game, but a Graf volley, a Seles shot into the net and a Graf cross-court winner ended the match.

"She was hitting the ball well, and I had to keep hitting great

shots back, but that's hard to do constantly," Seles said. "She pulled out a lot of points on her serve."

Graf narrowed Seles' lead in the computer ranking from 23 points to 16 in a system that averages out performances over the past year.

But Graf said the ranking matters less than the return of her confidence that had waned in the last few months.

"The way I played the last few matches makes me feel better, and I look forward to the next few matches," Graf said.

Graf won the U.S. Women's Hardcourt title twice after the tournament was revived in 1988, but did not enter last year because of a thumb injury. Seles was the defending champion. The victory earned Graf \$45,000.

Fernandez, Sukova win doubles title

In Tarpon Springs, Florida, Gigi Fernandez and Helena Sukova overcame a 5-1 third-set deficit Sunday to win the \$200,000 Light N' Lively doubles title.

The pair won 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7-3) over Natalia Zvereva and Larisa Savchenko of the Soviet Union. It was the second day in a row the top-seeded team rallied to win. In the semifinals, Fernandez and Sukova charged back from 5-0 in the opening set to defeat Kathy Jordan and Liz Smylie, 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

"If you can come back from 5-0 then you can definitely come back from 5-1," Fernandez said. "We thought about trying to win one point at a time and then the next thing we knew we had won a few games."

Sukova of Czechoslovakia and Fernandez of Puerto Rico split the \$75,000 winner's check. Zvereva and Savchenko shared \$35,000.

Savchenko and Zvereva, seeded second, served for the match twice, at 5-2 and 5-4. Each time they were broken, and the pressure to close out the match heightened. The pair bungled



Steffi Graf

routine volleys that kept the comeback of Fernandez and Sukova alive.

Navratilova prepares for clay event

Meanwhile Martina Navratilova has been on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina for a week, building a foundation for what she hopes will be a fifth victory in the Family Circle Magazine Cup Tournament.

"I'm working on everything, but everything's pretty good," Navratilova said. "Just some minor adjustments. No major overhauls on any stroke or anything. I feel fit and ready to go emotionally."

Now, if she just can remember to stay aggressive on the green

clay courts at the Sea Pines Racquet Club this week.

"This surface tends to make me more passive than you can be on a normal court. But I tend to take that a step too far."

Towards that end, Navratilova left the cold of Colorado for the warmth of Hilton Head Island.

"It's difficult to practice in Aspen in the altitude because you can't keep the ball in play very well in the altitude, even though there are indoor clay courts," she said. "And I need to set out-doots. I've only played one tournament outdoors since the U.S. Open."

Navratilova is the favorite for the tournament. She is the highest ranked player in the field at no. 3 in the world.

Real Madrid in pain after another home defeat

By Reuters

"SOMEBODY call an ambulance," wailed a headline after Real Madrid's 1-0 home defeat by mediocre Real Burgos left the Spanish champions facing the prospect of recording their worst ever season.

They are just two defeats short of their 1973-74 record of 13 losses and one home defeat short of the record five in 1984-85. Even worse, Real are in danger of failing to qualify for Europe for only the second time in the club's history.

"Frankly, I don't think reaching the UEFA Cup is going to be easy," said striker Emilio Butragueno after Sunday's spineless performance knocked them back to seventh place in the table.

A UEFA place would be Real's only consolation in an otherwise disastrous season which has seen the distinguished club tumble out of the European Cup and Spanish Cup.

"Now all our rivals come here thinking they have a chance," said Butragueno. The magic of Santiago Bernabeu seems to have worn off as Burgos snatched their first win in Real's stadium — a feat Real Sociedad achieved four weeks ago.

It was a depressing debut for Radomir Antic, the Yugoslav coach who replaced Alfredo di Stefano.

"I can see everybody is pretty demoralised," he said. "I have got a lot of work to do."

Antic was more confident than Butragueno about the team's UEFA chances. "There are 20 points left to play for, so I think we have still got a chance to qualify," he said.

Burgos coach Jose Manuel Diaz summed up Real's problems: "They are overcome by stage fright."

Atletico Madrid can only hope leaders Barcelona suffer similarly from stage fright. The two sides drew 1-1 Saturday, leaving Atletico still four points off the front runners.

The climax to the Italian League season has become overshadowed by Diego Maradona's positive dope test for cocaine, but that will not unduly worry

double-chasing Sampdoria.

On Wednesday league leaders Sampdoria, who have never won the championship, play a shell-shocked Napoli in the second leg of their Italian Cup semifinal.

The Genoa side trail by a goal from the first leg in Naples. But they will be favourites to qualify for the final in the absence of Maradona who is expected to receive a temporary suspension Tuesday ahead of the Italian Soccer Federation's disciplinary board meeting next weekend.

Sampdoria emerged satisfied from Saturday's disappointing goalless draw against city neighbours Genoa, chiefly because closest rivals Internazionale also drew — 1-1 at Napoli.

Sampdoria coach Vujadin Boskov said his side should have taken advantage of their numerical superiority when Genoa's Brazilian left back Branco was sent off early in the second half. "We were too nervous," he said. "But things are okay as they are. Inter are still three points behind us."

Inter coach Giovanni Trapattoni was frustrated by the failure of his side to hold on to their 1-0 lead after a virtuoso 72nd minute goal from German Lothar Matthaeus.

"The side didn't risk everything and that was precisely what it should have done," he said.

AC Milan's victory over Torino, following their local derby win against Inter last week, kept them in with an outside chance of the title, although their best hope for a trophy this season is in the Italian Cup.

Two weeks after they were knocked out of the European Cup by Marseille, Milan face Roma in the away leg of their semifinal with renewed confidence.

"Now we are much better, more determined and more practical," said coach Arrigo Sacchi. The first leg ended in a goalless draw.

Roma came back from two goals down to win 3-2 at Bologna Saturday, leaving coach Ottavio Bianchi bemused.

"We're basically a bit mad as a football team," he said.

Finland's Kankkunen wins Safari Rally

NAIROBI (R) — Former world champion Juha Kankkunen of Finland, driving a Lancia Integrale, won the six-day, 4,500 kilometre Safari Rally Monday.

His second victory in the Kenyan event was assured after he took the lead early Sunday.

Sweden's Mikael Ericsson, driving a Toyota Celica, was second 26 minutes behind and Jorge Recalde of Argentina, in a Lancia, was third.

Kankkunen, winner of the Safari Rally in 1985 and runner up last year, notched up an accumulated penalty time of two hours, seven minutes and 10 seconds, while Ericsson had a time of 2:33:34 and Recalde's time was 2:46:13.

Kankkunen had snatched the lead in the race, considered one of the toughest on the rallying

circuit, early Sunday when world champion Carlos Sainz of Spain retired with engine trouble after leading since the start last Wednesday.

Kankkunen had a lead of 21 minutes over Ericsson when the race set off before dawn Monday to wind round the foothills of Mount Kenya and south to Nairobi.

Ericsson, who was third in the Safari Rally last year, lost a few more minutes early on in the last stage, saying he had been slowed by dust.

The victory in one of the fastest Safari rallies in recent years was an early birthday present for Kankkunen, who will be 32 Tuesday.

"It's a much faster rally than last year," said Kankkunen before the start of Monday's leg.

The rally was characterised by remarkably fast times over the first two days — a deliberate move to keep more competitors in for longer — and also by good weather.

An early casualty was former world champion Miki Biasion of Italy, much favoured before the start but forced out on the second day after his Lancia Integrale collided with a lorry.

Sainz, current leader in the world championship standings, led the race from the first leg, although with a margin of only a few minutes over his rivals.

But early on in Sunday's leg, Sainz, driving a Toyota, was forced out with engine trouble.

Kankkunen had moved up to chase Sainz from second position Friday as the race moved into tougher terrain and much-fancied Bjorn Waldegard of Sweden slipped back with engine trouble to his Toyota.

Kankkunen, world champion in 1986 and 1987, said: "The Safari is still the longest and most difficult rally counting for the world championship and it's very exciting to win it."

The victory took him to within two points of Sainz in the world championship standings.

"Now I am in a position to make an assault on the title," he said.

America beats Nacional of Medellin in Copa Libertadores

MIAMI (R) — Antonio de Avila scored in the 37th minute to give America of Cali a 1-0 win over Nacional of Medellin Sunday in the first Copa Libertadores soccer match ever played outside of South America.

The victory lengthened America's lead in Group V of the South American Club Championships to three points as the Colombian national champions have earned seven points from four games.

Nacional and Tachira of Venezuela are tied for second with four points each for four games.

The America-Nacional match, which drew a crowd of 16,720, was the first of seven that will be played in Miami during the next three weeks because of a FIFA ban against Colombia bosting international tournament matches because of fan violence and death threats to a referee in that country.

De Avila's goal was a gift for America, coming after a gamble by Nacional goalkeeper Rene Higuita backfired.

The flashy Colombian keeper raced out of the penalty area to collect a loose ball but bad difficulties controlling it.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH
1990 Tribune Media Services Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠K ♠A983 ♠J543 ♠KJ2
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—In most methods, North is showing a balanced hand of some 19-20 points. While the honor cards in partner's suit are attractive, the hearts are weak and the hand is riddled with losers. We prefer a pass, but will accept five clubs as a second choice.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠1076 ♠K5 ♠J1083 ♠AQJ9
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
1 ♠ Pass Pass Pass DM
Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—Bear in mind that, in the balancing seat, partner's double could be about a king lighter than in the direct position. Therefore, we would tend to be a bit conservative here. We think that one no trump is adequate and will allow partner some breathing room if his double was more courtesy than substance.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠K ♠QJ105 ♠KJ82 ♠10875
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—It's a question of how much value to assign to the bare king of spades. In support of hearts you have a pretty reasonable hand, and even if you count your singleton king as only three points, we feel

you are worth a jump raise to three hearts.

Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Void ♠6543 ♠84 ♠AKQJ1085
As dealer, what action do you take?

A.—With seven sure tricks for a possible no trump contract, this hand is too good to pass or preempt. In addition, the four-card major makes a preempt unattractive. Our vote goes to an opening bid of one club, with pass a distant second.

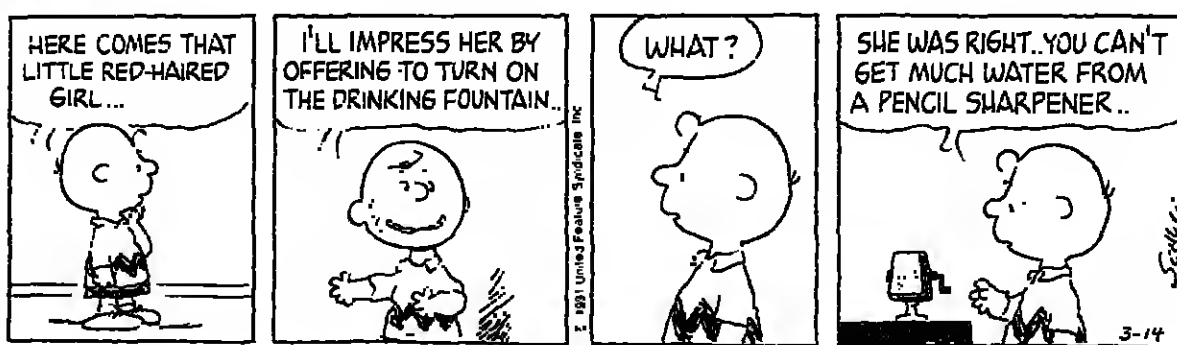
Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AK ♠A1063 ♠A36 ♠KJ92
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
2 NT Pass 4 NT Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—With so many prime cards, reasonable intermediates and a ruffing value, slam could be there in a suit if you have a 4-4 fit. The way to probe is to bid five clubs now. That is natural, not an ace-showing response. If partner bids five diamonds, continue the probe by bidding five hearts. Sign off at five no trump if you do not find a fit.

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠J93 ♠AK1062 ♠AK ♠J42
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—You have 16 points and no way to show them! To bid no trump without a secure stopper in either black suit is absurd, and to raise diamonds with a doubleton, even with the two top honors, is out of the question. Bid two hearts and wait for partner's rebid.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY APRIL 2, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You want to get along better with others but there is some confidential secret support that they are expecting be given them before they will respond as you would like them to.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) An influential man is willing to give you the boost towards that wish that fascinates you so much and that requires a considerable amount of action.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You are able to contact that specialist in a field that interests you and get him to release some information that can help you greatly.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is your day to make sure you are the one who does get in touch with good friends in let them know how food you are of them.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) There are a number of fascinating situations in the outside world that you can handle with effective intelligence so do so.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is the time for you to make sure you get off to some new place and make acquaintances of those very different from you but who is very expert.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is that moment to be sure to get into new systems of all kinds whereby you can impress any and all contacts with your impressive abilities.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Partners in all walks of life see

your best qualities now and will give you the cooperation you want in making the decisions where you are going.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have all kinds of projects to get done now so don't waste any more time but get at those duties and you find you do them all well.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You are able to find those attractive pleasures and persons that can take you out of the rut of projects and you can have a good time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You now find that practically everyone is willing to help you get ahead at some basic obligation through so new method is most interesting.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is the moment when you are able to find the right companion to assist you with any routine matters that you enjoy doing but need help.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is your time to think in terms of a greater abundance and to spare than you have yet realized so get some new money making ideas.

Today's child: If your child were born today she or he upon maturity will be a good host or hostess par excellence and you would be wise to train this little charmer to expand this ability so that many persons can benefit from this special ability. This is a great chart for working in diplomacy as well as in more strictly social vocations.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"My wife faxed me a kiss? How embarrassing!"

JUMBLE

THAT'S SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DILAY

RODLE

YABSUW

SAWURL

Hey, Prof—can I give you some advice?

Among the many things that are superfluous is this.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: "A TO THE"

Yesterday's Jumbles: FAVOR THILL PLEDGE BANANA

Answer: What a man who has a bad liver might have been—A BAD LIVER

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

SHAW STANIS BELLA

COLE ALLEN AXIS

APHA MEGAN VITTA

DEADLOCK KIVUED

LEAK RELLY

APION STEED DALL

BEACON RAYS ELL

DAVE EVANGE OLLA

ONE SCALP SAVINGS

ONE SCALP SAVINGS

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Arab Banking Corporation blames Gulf crisis for loss

BAHRAIN (R) — Arab Banking Corporation (ABC) the biggest international Arab bank, Sunday announced a net 1990 loss of \$91 million which it said was largely due to the Gulf crisis.

President and chief executive Abdullah Sandi told reporters that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August, deepening recession in the industrial world, and the continuing debt problems of less developed countries (LDC), had reversed a promising start to the year.

"I think 1990 was a very difficult year... the first six months were very gratifying since we were able to meet all our goals... then we were faced with this war crisis," he said.

"As a result, instead of going for expansion, we find ourselves adopting policies and measures to protect shareholders' funds as well as to be able to meet all our obligations and commitments," he added.

The bank set aside \$179 million in loan loss provisions in 1990, bringing its total cover against non-performing loans to \$846 million or 7.5 per cent.

ABC transferred its entire 1989 profit of \$132 million to loan loss provisions. A bank statement said the value of its LDC loan portfolio was cut to \$1.16 billion during 1990 from \$1.74 billion the previous year.

Despite the Gulf crisis, Saudi said, ABC's total income for the year rose by 9.7 per cent to a record \$555 million.

Loans also climbed, by 10.3 per cent to \$1.03 billion.

But deposits fell by eight per cent to \$16.62 billion, mainly due to a sharp drop in interbank deposits caused by the loss of international confidence in Gulf-based banks. This was partially offset by a jump in customer deposits.

Total assets fell by five per cent to \$20.6 billion.

Operating expenses also rose steeply to \$402 million from \$322 million. Saudi said this was due to the cost of maintaining high levels of liquidity during the crisis and a steep rise in subsidiary expenses when expressed in dollars.

Shareholders' funds rose sharply to \$1.386 billion from \$1.15 billion in 1989 after the bank's 1990 share offering.

ABC, owned mainly by Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and Libya, became the first Gulf-based bank to offer shares to foreign investors on the open market with a \$350 million issue last June.

Saudi Arabian private investors now hold 6.5 per cent of its shares and international investors 15 per cent.

Part of the money from the new share issue was used to finance a new ABC subsidiary in London which will give the bank a foothold in Europe after European Community markets unify.

Saudi said the subsidiary, ABC International Bank, would open Monday. It has a paid-in capital of £150 million and authorised capital of £300 million.

Saudi said the Gulf war had delayed the long-term strategy of ABC to increase its links with the Arab World, but it expected to pursue them again once the situation stabilised. ABC had offered to loan Kuwait money for reconstruction but its government had not yet decided whether to accept, he said.

The bank cut 15 jobs in investment banking department in Bahrain and London and another 15 in its German subsidiary.

Curfew cost Palestinians \$5.2 million per day

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The protracted curfew imposed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the Gulf war cost the residents of the occupied regions \$5.2 million per day, according to a study by Palestinian economist Samir Huleilah.

In a report for the Israeli human rights organisation B'tselem, he said that the curfew had completely paralysed the economic life of the territories. Industry, which employs about 30,000 people, had lost contracts and clients and its exports to Jordan and other Arab states had been blocked by the closure of the bridges over the Jordan River.

Agriculture, which employs about 40,000 people, had also suffered serious damage, said Mr. Huleilah.

Exports both to Jordan and Israel had been halted and the quality of produce had fallen because it had been impossible to spray and harvest crops on time.

In addition, the curfew had caused a sharp fall in consumption of agricultural produce in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, leading to surpluses which had to be disposed of at a loss.

Demand for meat was down 80 per cent, poultry consumption fell by 40 per cent and demand for fresh vegetables dropped by 70 per cent, said the report.

One of the biggest costs of the curfew was suffered by the thousands of Palestinians who work in construction and other sectors in Israel, and who lost several weeks' wages through being prevented from travelling to work.

Islamists go into cut-price produce business in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Whether from motives of charity or political opportunism, Algeria's Muslim fundamentalists have pulled off a minor miracle where government pressure and union strikes have failed.

Through a network of markets and restaurants, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) has cut the price of fruit, vegetables and meat to the hard-pressed consumer by up to 75 per cent.

A Muslim cleric goes out to the market gardens with the buyers to persuade the farmers to hold their prices down.

"You are trading with God in this holy month of Ramadan, when the gates of paradise are open," he tells them.

Local government departments dominated by the FIS, Algeria's main Islamic movement, provide trucks for transport and money from the zakat (alms tax) to pay the young fundamentalist sales assistants.

Muslim prayers on plaques adorn the stalls of fruit and vegetables where bearded salesmen work late into the evening to serve the willing customers.

"We charge three dinars (17 cents) for a kilogramme of lettuce instead of 12 (65 cents) elsewhere. Meat is 90 dinars (\$5) compared with more than 190 (\$11). It's a miracle that only Islamic morals can bring about," said Mahmoud Zahani, a young Algiers City councillor close to the FIS.

Consumer prices have surged as the country makes the switch from central planning to a market economy. A general strike in protest paralysed state industries for two days last month.

"It's not only the prices that draw the customers," adds Ahmed Maran, president of the FIS social affairs committee. "It's also the atmosphere of generosity and compassion, absent in the other markets."

Maran said the markets could not satisfy demand but they would serve as a model for other experiments, for example in clothing in the last days of Ramadan. New clothes are the usual present for the feast which follows the month of fasting.

Mahmoud the city councillor said another attraction was that housewives felt safer at stalls where the sexes are segregated.

"We put into practice the precepts of our religion, which bans sexes mixing and bodies rubbing together in the jostling as in other markets," he added.

Abdul Karim Agoun, who runs one of the charity restaurants at an Algiers mosque, said, "our party (the FIS) has chosen to save the people, we are doing it with the means at our disposal."

On Saturday evening, just as the daytime fasting of Ramadan comes to an end, some 70 of his customers say their grace and tuck into bowls of soup, plates of meat, salad and dates.

"It's like being at home and I meet new brothers," said Ahmed, a rubbish collector from the interior. He pays five dinars (30 cents) for his dinner, a tenth of the cost elsewhere.

Agoun said the mosque had collected two million dinars (\$110,000) from Muslims who for one reason or another had missed a day of Ramadan fasting. For each day missed they pay for 30 dinners, either in cash or in kind.

More restaurants have opened in other mosques. The town hall in the old Casbah quarter runs one in a large reception room.

"The mosque will be the core of social action in the future Islamic republic. From the mosque we all know the standard of living of all the inhabitants," said Ahmed Goumi, who works in one of the mosque-restaurants.

The FIS says its charity work has done more to help the poor than actions like the general strike by the trade union federation, the General Union of Algerian Workers, which the Islamic Trade Union did not join.

But the FIS's detractors dismiss the markets and restaurants as a gimmick to win votes in general elections expected to take place in late June or early July.

"These tricks are just a new laser game with the elections in mind," said taxi driver Hassan Sarri.

Last May and June, ahead of local elections which the FIS won, the words "God Almighty" appeared in the skies of Algiers during FIS rallies. Its opponents said the front had bought a laser for the purpose, its supporters that it was a miracle foretelling their election success.

Other shopkeepers accuse the Islamists of unfair competition, by not paying taxes and by using local government vehicles for transport.

Bulgarians go on buying spree

SOFIA (R) — Bulgarians gripping dollars and Deutschmarks flocked to hard currency shops Sunday to snap up goods before the government outlaws spending anything other than the local lev currency on retail purchases.

Panic buying and long queues marked the last day of shopping before the government decree takes effect at thousands of so-called free stores across the country. For decades they were Bulgarians' only source of luxury goods.

"Especially last winter, with the chronic food shortages and empty shop shelves, our free shops were the only place where people could buy something to eat," one salesman said.

The government has said the move is necessary to support its programme of currency reform.

"This is the next step on the road to abolish a currency dualism in the Bulgarian market," Finance Minister Ivan Kostov told journalists.

But many Bulgarians are worried that the step would drive prices for several items out of their reach.

One shop assistant said prices in leva were likely to rise 30 to 50 times from their dollar equivalents as the free stores sought to pass along higher taxes and hedge against the danger of a weakening lev.

If, as many fear, ordinary shops tried to match the price rises, several items could be beyond the pockets of most Bulgarians, whose average monthly salary is around 750 leva (\$50).

A packet of American cigarettes could cost 50 leva (\$3.3), a bottle of whisky 500 leva (\$33) and a television set 20,000 leva (\$1,333), five times more than the same goods now cost in ordinary shops.

That could prompt many Bulgarians with hard currency to go shopping across the border in Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

Operators in the black market for currency welcomed the move, which they calculated would make the dollar more valuable by fuelling inflationary pressure in the Bulgarian economy.

The dollar is now worth around 15 leva, down from 28.25 when the government let the lev's exchange rate float freely against hard currencies two months ago.

"This is a great favour for us after the stab in the neck by the liberalisation of the dollar rate," one black marketer said. "People will start giving us their hard currency again and the sale of our contraband goods will give us higher profits."

A currency black market still exists to serve customers, especially in the countryside, with no ready access to hard currency and to take advantage of more favourable rates abroad.

Peru reaching out to creditors

LIMA (R) — Peru, for years a black sheep of the international financial family, is reaching out to creditors in the hope that fresh loans will lift it from what one lending agency official called "a life or death situation."

This week, Economy Minister Carlos Bolona will visit Washington to try to convince multilateral lending agencies and the U.S. Treasury that his country — beset by severe economic recession, guerrilla violence, drug trafficking and a deadly cholera epidemic — is in dire need of help.

Peru wants to form a support group of creditor countries to provide \$800 million in emergency loans that would help finance an International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic stabilisation programme agreed in December.

"Some understandings have been reached and there is a positive attitude on the part of the Treasury Department," said a source close to the talks, who said the United States and Japan would likely lead the group.

Bolona also hopes Peru can secure some of the same debt reduction benefits that Poland received two weeks ago when the Paris Club of lending countries forgave \$33 billion of Polish debt. Peru owes the club \$6.5 billion.

"Peru is in a life or death situation," Claude Chambray, a member of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) board of governors said during a visit to Lima in March.

Bolona will meet IMF Director Michel Camdessus, World Bank President Barber Conable, IADB Director Enrique Iglesias and U.S. Treasury Undersecretary Richard Dallara before travelling to Nagoya, Japan, for the IADB board of governors meeting, the economy ministry said.

Peru became an outcast in international financial circles in the 1980s when former president Alan Garcia limited payments on Peru's \$22 billion foreign debt to 10 per cent of annual exports.

Current President Alberto Fujimori resumed payments of about \$35 million a month to the IMF, World Bank and IADB in a bid to regain creditor confidence. In December, Peru agreed to follow an IMF economic stabilisation programme.

Fujimori implemented an austerity programme aimed at controlling inflation, which reached nearly 3,000 per cent in 1990, and cutting public sector spending.

Recently the government took steps to liberalise the economy after two decades of state intervention. It sharply lowered import duties, ended monopolies held by 12 state-owned firms and lifted restrictions on holding foreign currency.

But even if Peru wins fresh financing, serious economic problems lie ahead. Economist Oscar Ugarteche, author of a new book on Peru's debt, warns that opening the economy to imports could produce a serious balance of payments problem this year.

Panic buying sweeps Soviet Union

MOSCOW (R) — Panic buying swept the Soviet Union as consumers skipped work to stand in long queues to buy basic food ahead of steep price rises due Tuesday.

The panic reached such serious proportions that rationing was introduced in some regions for bread — usually the most abundant item in the Soviet diet. Shops closed early to halt the flood of anxious consumers.

A meeting scheduled for Tuesday between striking coal miners and Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov added to the tension.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev may also attend the meeting, aimed at ending the four-week-old strike which has dealt a blow to the country's key heavy industries. The miners are demanding pay increases of up to 150 per cent.

Long-awaited rises averaging about 60 per cent coincide with government attempts to create a market economy. Many staples, including meat and bread, will triple in price.

To offset the steep rises, the central government on March 20 began giving out compensation. Students received 60 roubles (\$72 at the inflated official rate) and families 40 roubles for each child under 16 years old.

But the extra money will scarcely soften the blow. The average monthly salary is about 270 roubles.

The Communist Party newspaper Pravda, capturing the country's mood on the eve of the price reform, asked in a front-page headline: "Are we making toast?"

The headline was a reference to thousands of desperate people who have bought up bread at old prices to be eaten as toast later when it is stale. Pravda noted that the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 began with an acute shortage of bread.

In Ulan Ude, a town in eastern Siberia near the Mongolian border, bread rationing went into effect Monday with shoppers limited to two loaves a day. Bread has not been rationed there since 1947.

Rationing of nearly all basic food items was introduced in the city of Cherkassk in the Tatar region, and consumers were permitted to shop only in designated stores.

The price reforms have come under harsh criticism from radicals, who favour a more rapid transition to a market economy.

Boris Yeltsin, president of the giant Russian Federation, has accused central authorities of waiting too long to embark on a transition to a market economy.

Russian Prime Minister Ivan Silayev Saturday outlined a new economic programme in a session of the Russian Supreme legislature. He said the key issue was to give freedom to enterprises to prevent a further fall in production.

Silayev's programme is likely to face severe opposition from the Kremlin, which intends to maintain central control of key areas of the economy even after the signing of a new union treaty with the republics.

Moscow Deputy Mayor Sergei Stankevich said disagreement between the republics and the central government over reform has raised doubts whether the price rises will be fully implemented.

"Confrontation has prevailed, and there is no willingness on the part of the central government to compromise," he said.

Strike halts flights of Turkish Airlines

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey's air transport system was paralysed Monday when more than 10,000 workers walked off the job to back demands for big pay increases. The indefinite strike by the pilots and maintenance workers of the national carrier Turkish Airlines brought all its domestic and foreign flights to a halt. The strike came at the end of six months of contract talks. The union, Hava-Is, representing 10,500 workers, has asked for a 600 per cent increase over salaries currently paid for the first year of a two-year contract. The union asked an additional 75 per cent increase for the second year. The monthly wage for Turkish workers employed by the Turkish Airlines ranged between \$15,000-2.8 million Turkish liras (\$139-\$757).

Brokerage ordered to pay \$750,000 to fired analyst

PHILADELPHIA (R) — A Philadelphia brokerage firm was ordered to pay \$750,000 to a stock analyst it fired for suggesting that real-estate magnate Donald Trump was facing money troubles.

The New York Stock Exchange ordered Janney Montgomery Scott to pay the penalty to analyst Marvin Roffman, who was fired in March 1990 after working for the firm for 16 years.

Roffman was sacked after saying that Trump's Taj Mahal Casino, the glitziest casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, could have serious financial difficulties.

He questioned the casino's ability to gross \$1 million a day to cover its interest costs and operating expenses.

Roffman was one of the first to suggest there were cracks in the Trump empire.

In response, Trump not only complained about the negative comments, but threatened to sue the brokerage.

Janney Montgomery said at the time that Roffman was fired not for his comments but for retracting a letter of apology he had written to Trump about the comments.

Trump has since defaulted on some bonds and reached an agreement with creditors to place the Taj Mahal in bankruptcy.

Short of cash, Trump was skating from one debt crisis to the next trying to maintain a hold on his shaky but vast real estate and casino empire.

Roffman had sought \$3 million in proceedings he brought before the New York Stock Exchange — \$1 million for defamation, \$1 million for wrongful discharge and \$1 million for the "intentional infliction of emotional distress."

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Colloquial Jordanian Arabic for BEGINNERS
Dates: twice weekly, evenings, 21 April—18 June
Fee JD 70
Registration: 3,6,9,10 April, 1 pm to 5 pm

<p>TODAY AT</p> <p>Cinema RAINBOW Tel: 625155</p> <p>Adel Imam — Mirvat Amin in TIT FOR TAT (Arabic)</p> <p>Show: 3:30, 8:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Cinema CONCORD Tel: 677420</p> <p>Duraid Laham — Madlin Taber in Kafroon</p> <p>Show: 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Cinema PHILADELPHIA Tel: 634144</p> <p>KARATE KID II</p> <p>Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Cinema PLAZA Tel: 699238</p> <p>COMING TO AMERICA</p> <p>Show: 12:30, 3:15, 8:00, 10:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Cinema NIJOM Tel: 675571</p> <p>Adel Adham & Najwa Fuad in THE REVENGE (Arabic)</p> <p>Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.</p>	

AMMAN BACCALAUREATE SCHOOL

Is now accepting student applications for next academic year.

ABS aims to provide an education which, while remaining firmly rooted in the Arab heritage and culture, aspires to meet the highest international standards. The school is coeducational and caters for students aged 3-19 years old, offering an academically rigorous programme culminating in either the Jordanian Tawjihi or the International Baccalaureate.

Although most students work bilingually, special provision is made throughout the school for students with little or no Arabic. In Junior School (grades 1-5) a special Arabic as a Second Language programme is offered. In Senior School (grades 6-12) students may study in English only while learning the Arabic language.

KINDERGARTEN
KG offers a bilingual programme which includes visits and drama and music taught by specialist teachers.

JUNIOR SCHOOL (Grades 1-5)
The bilingual programme is enriched by drama, music, art, computing and activities. (Please note that vacancies are very limited in certain grades).

SENIOR SCHOOL (Grades 6-12)
Senior School culminates in Tawjihi (Science) or the International Baccalaureate (IB), an internationally recognised university entrance qualification of high academic standing. In Middle School (grades 6-8) most students study bilingually. The programme includes French, computing, technology, drama and music. (Those with limited or no Arabic study in English only). In Upper School (grades 9-12) students prepare for Tawjihi (with additional subjects studied in English) or for IGCSE/GCE and then IB. IGCSE is an internationally recognised qualification of the University of Cambridge taught in English, equivalent in standard to GCE "O" level.

General information and application forms may be obtained from the school during office hours (Saturday to Wednesday 8:30 - 2:30; Thursdays 8:30 - 1:00). Parents wishing to discuss the school's programme in more detail are asked to arrange appointments through the Junior or Senior School offices, or to visit KG (KG open 9:30 - 1:00).

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Gorbachev and politburo blast opposition, allege foreign threat

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his Communist Party colleagues launched a bitter assault on the radical opposition at the weekend, accusing their opponents of seeking power at all costs.

Gorbachev, increasingly resuming the role of party chief as well as state president, told an army meeting his reformist opponents were trying "to destabilise society, to shake, weaken and even destroy our constitutional structures."

After a separate meeting under his chairmanship, the party politburo denounced non-Communist opposition groups as "destructive forces" and accused them of using slander and strike calls to undermine Soviet society.

The politburo also said "certain foreign organisations" were trying to influence public opinion and a Moscow intelligence chief accused Western diplomats, journalists and tourists of working to stir unrest.

The party daily Pravda Monday published the attacks on the opposition along with readers' letters defending Gorbachev, now six years in power, against

his radical critics.

"I really suffer for our president," a Ukrainian war veteran wrote. "He is devoting so much effort to the problems of the country. Those who insult him have forgotten it was he who gave us real freedom."

The assault on the radicals, whom Communists accuse of aiming to restore capitalism, followed a major confrontation Thursday between the opposition, which has yet to unite in one movement, and the Gorbachev administration.

The Kremlin leader ordered a huge display of military and police force in Moscow in an unsuccessful attempt to head off an anti-demonstration in support of Boris Yeltsin, his chief rival and leader of the Russian Federation.

The show of opposition strength deterred an attempt by Communists in the Russian parliament to oust him as its chairman. But pro-Gorbachev deputies stopped a drive by Yeltsin to become full Russian president.

Gorbachev told the army meeting Saturday the opposition was carrying out anti-democratic ac-



Boris Yeltsin

tions "under the slogan of a struggle for democracy."

"A major danger from one part of present opposition tendencies lies in the fact that they are, for their own political ends, exploiting and whipping up tension in society at any cost," he said.

The party, he said, should strengthen its links with workers and all sections of the population. "In doing this, we Communists have a tremendous chance not

only to preserve but strengthen our position as the ruling party," he added.

Gorbachev, accused by former liberal allies as well as radicals of turning conservative to realign himself with the party bureaucracy, rejected reformists' calls for an end to Communist organisations within the armed forces.

The politburo statement did not specify which foreign groups were trying to influence events in the Soviet Union. KGB General Gennady Titov, head of Soviet counter-intelligence, said at the weekend Western agents were involved.

Titov told the Rabochaya Tribuna newspaper Western interests aimed to preserve a weakened Soviet Union as a source of cheap labour and renewed charges made earlier this year that foreigners aimed to wreck the economy with vast sums of roubles smuggled abroad.

When Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov first made the charges, Gorbachev told foreign bankers and companies investing in the Soviet Union not to overestimate their significance.

Swedish engineer kidnapped in Kashmir

SRINAGAR (R) — Unidentified gunmen have kidnapped a Swedish engineer in Indian-ruled Kashmir, the first foreigner seized there since a separatist rebellion erupted 15 months ago, police said Monday.

They said Joe Jansen was kidnapped while returning home from a weekend in the Himalayan ski resort of Gulmarg with his wife and child.

The gunmen who stopped Jansen's car allowed the child and his wife Ursula to go. She reported the incident to police.

J.N. Saksena, police chief in Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, said he did not know if separatist militants were responsible.

"Our information is sketchy at the moment," he said.

Jansen was working on a hydro-electric project near the line that divided Indian- and Pakistan-ruled Kashmir.

The gunmen stopped his car about 40 kilometres from Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, Ursula Jansen told police.

It was the kidnapping of a daughter of then Indian Home (Interior) Minister Mufi Mohammad Sayeed that sparked the latest rebellion in Kashmir.

Sayeed's daughter was freed in exchange for five detained members of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), one of the main separatist organisations, in January, 1990.

The celebrations that followed the release of the five senior JKLF men turned into riots which marked the beginning of the insurgency. They were ruthlessly put down. Police have reported some 2,400 people killed in the campaign since then.

Several other Kashmiris have been kidnapped since, including the head of Kashmir University in Srinagar, who was killed along with two other people by militants when the government refused to free more separatists.

Yugoslav army, Croats keep peace after clashes

PLITVICE, Yugoslavia (R) — Yugoslav army tanks and Croatian riot police kept a tight grip on this tourist resort Monday after two people were killed in gun battles between Serbs and Croats, the country's biggest ethnic groups.

Plitvice, a wooded cluster of lakes and waterfalls in the western republic of Croatia, remained calm and 230 Italian tourists were evacuated after being trapped in Sunday's violence.

Tanks guarded entrances to the region, Croatian police with automatic rifles mounted roadblocks for miles around and rebel Serbs blocked other roads with rocks and trees.

Local transport was in chaos and schools were closed. Six bullet-riddled cars lay abandoned beside Plitvice's main road.

The Yugoslav State Presidency ordered out all Serbian and Croatian forces after the violence, in which 20 people were hurt and 29 arrested, but the command appears to have been ignored.

Fighting broke out Sunday when Croatian riot police evicted Serbs who took over Plitvice Thursday. A Croatian policeman and a Serb were killed during exchanges of gunfire that left

blood spattered on snow by the road.

The presidency ordered in the army to keep the peace and separate the Croatian police and the Serbs. It "ordered army units to ensure that the ceasefire is respected."

The clashes were the worst between Serbs and Croats, ancient religious and political rivals, in several months of tension that threatens to lead to civil war and break up the Yugoslav Federation of six republics and two provinces.

Serbs comprise about 11 per cent of Croatia's 4.5 million population and say they are persecuted.

The Serbs who dominate the area around Plitvice, which they call Kninska Krajina, have declared independence from Croatia and say they want to remain in Yugoslavia if Croatia's nationalist government carries out its threats to secede.

Two more regions, Glina and Kostajnica, Sunday joined Krajina in declaring independence from Croatia.

About 2,500 Serbs protested in the Croatian town of Knin Monday.

Results show huge support for Georgia independence

MOSCOW (AP) — Georgians almost unanimously favour independence in the strongest referendum yet to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to hold the union together, preliminary voting results indicated Monday.

In 38 of the republic's 71 districts, 99.3 per cent of voters in Sunday's referendum favoured breaking away from the USSR, said Valerian Khukhushvili, a Georgian government spokesman in Moscow.

Nearly 90 per cent of the 3.3 million eligible voters in the fractious southern republic cast ballots, the Independent Interfax News Agency quoted Vakhtang Khmaladze, chairman of Georgia's Electoral Commission, as saying.

Because of its near-unanimity and high turnout, the vote dealt an even stronger blow to Gorbachev's campaign to unite the 15 diverse republics in a new union treaty than similar referendums in the three Baltic republics.

In February, 91 per cent of Lithuanian voters endorsed independence, followed in March by 74 per cent of Latvians and 78 per cent of Estonians. Armenia has scheduled a vote for Sept. 21.

The Georgian referendum asked: "Do you agree that the state independence of Georgia should be restored on the basis of

the independence act of May 26, 1918?"

Georgia, a multi-ethnic republic of 5.3 million wedged between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea, proclaimed independence from the Russian Empire near the end of World War I. It was forcibly absorbed into the Soviet Union nearly three years later and incorporated under a 1924 union treaty.

There was no immediate reaction to the preliminary results from the Georgian government or Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian nationalist leader recently elected president on a programme of independence. He confidently predicted victory Sunday.

Independence-minded Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Armenia — plus Moldavia — refused to take part in Gorbachev's March 17 nationwide referendum on preserving the union.

Nine republics, representing three-quarters of the country's population, approved the referendum by 76 per cent. Gorbachev has used the result to bolster support for his proposed new union treaty.

He says the anti-Kremlin polls are invalid, but he will not try to stop them.

Moscow retreats from Laos

VIENTIANE (R) — The Soviet Union's reduction in its overseas commitments is making itself felt in this charming but penniless corner of South East Asia where Moscow is ending a 15-year role as economic, diplomatic and political crutch to Laos.

On the outskirts of this languid capital stands the unfinished bulk of the new Soviet embassy, begun three years ago when Moscow had big plans for its South East Asian outpost.

For the past year work on what would have been Vientiane's tallest building has been at best desultory.

Soviet and Laotian officials said that since the beginning of this year all but humanitarian aid from Moscow would cease and be replaced by trade based on world prices. Laos would be asked to repay its debts in goods.

"We are not retreating from the region, and we don't want to. We are just trying to find a more suitable way to live here," said Valeriy Stetsinin, councillor at the Soviet embassy.

The shift hinges to an end a shotgun marriage forged during the early days of the cold war when Pathet Lao guerrillas faced the full weight of U.S. forces determined to keep communism out of the Indochinese hinterland.

But as the guerrillas took power and ties with neighbouring China deteriorated, the partnership became vital in the survival of Laos.

Soviet aid to the country's scattered four million inhabitants was their only reliable source of funds to rebuild a shattered economy and shunt Laos into the 20th century.

Few people believe the marriage was particularly successful, but few doubt Laos would have been worse off without it.

"I feel sorry for the Soviets. They did their best here, but in concrete terms I think Soviet and Lao were quite bewildered by each other," said one diplomat.

Many Soviet projects were too cumbersome for a scattered agrarian economy in the sweltering heart of Asia.

One vehicle repair workshop in the southern province of Savannakhet is far too large for the small number of cars or tractors in the province.

The tractors themselves are designed for the Soviet Union's cold climates and cannot cope with local temperatures.

"We have to take it all because it is part of a free loan, but if we had to say so we would admit it was not always effective," said one Laotian official.

Stetsinin said the Soviet Union, whose domestic crisis has forced it to renegotiate economic ties with all three Indochinese countries, would try to lighten the burden of its sudden break in aid.

Thousands of Laotians studying in the Soviet Union would be allowed to finish their studies and a further 150, most of them technical students, would go this year.

At least 20 experts would stay on here to work at three Soviet-built hospitals.

More than 100,000 tonnes of oil would also be supplied this year and paid for with peanuts and parquet flooring.

"We will try to fulfil all our obligations and find a new form of cooperation," Stetsinin said.

But there is no doubt the Soviet Union is leaving. The number of specialists was cut in half this year. More than 100 military advisers have left. From 1992 all of Laos' military supplies will have to be bought.

There seems to be little resentment among Lao officials at Moscow's hasty retreat.

Officials are careful not to criticise the Soviet Union, and differences have emerged only sporadically in the media. Strategically, Laos has already made friends with once-hostile neighbours China and Thailand and its former enemy, the United States.

But the current leadership, weaned on Lenin and Marx in the jungle and used to holidays in the Soviet Union, will find it hard to let go of the comforts of being part of a Socialist bloc.

"It's going to be hard for them not to have that sense of protection the Soviets gave them any more," said one diplomat.

Burmese troops clash with rebels, kill civilians

BANGKOK (AP) — Government bombers have killed civilians in attacks meant to root out guerrillas concealed by jungle, guerrilla officials said Monday.

Burmese troops and Karen guerrillas have clashed in the past week north of Burma's Salween River, said one Karen official, reached by telephone at the Thai frontier. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

He said the fighting, with 400-500 soldiers on each side, was the first significant Burmese attack this dry season. The battle was continuing, with the government troops apparently trying to cut Karen communications northwest of the Karen headquarters at

Manerplaw, he said.

Another Karen official said he believed the government was using Yugoslav jet planes in its daily bombing runs.

Burma was reported to have recently bought large quantities of Yugoslav and Chinese weapons, including jet fighters. They cannot find us, so they bomb the villages nearby," the first official said.

Inhabitants of one village, Mepa, told the guerrillas that 20 villagers had been killed in bombing about a week ago, this official said. The fighting had driven about 1,000 people from their homes to take refuge in the jungle, he added.

Roh: Koreans should apply for U.N. membership

SEOUL (Agencies) — President Roh Tae-woo said Monday that entry into the United Nations by longtime rivals South and North Korea was key to peace on the divided peninsula and to all of Asia.

"The Gulf war is a stark reminder that the world we live in is still fraught with uncertainties and instabilities," Roh told 1,000 delegates from 48 nations attending a major U.N. conference.

"Entry into the United Nations... until such time as the peninsula is unified will be conducive to the peace and stability not only of the Korean peninsula but of the entire region as well," he said.

Roh spoke at the opening session of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific. The 10-day conference was attended by ministers from 48 nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France.

Communist North Korea was the only Asian nation not attending, officials said.

The Seoul Shinmun quoted an unnamed source as saying Roh will send a message to North Korean President Kim Il Sung urging the North to enter the United Nations together with the South.

The daily paper said the message will be conveyed to Kim verbally by Rep. Park Jung-Soo,

who will head a South Korean delegation to the 85th general meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Pyongyang later this month.

The conference focused on reviewing economic and social development in Asian nations, particularly in terms of analysing the impact of the Gulf war.

Roh's comments come as the Seoul government is intensifying its campaign to apply for U.N. membership, probably within the next four months. North Korea has demanded the two nations apply for a single revolving membership, a proposal Seoul claims is impractical.

Roh wants to visit the United States in May or June to discuss helping to rebuild war-affected regions of the Gulf, newspapers said Monday.

The influential Chosun Ilbo quoted an unidentified senior government official as saying U.S. and South Korean officials had been negotiating a meeting between Roh and President George Bush since mid-March.

U.S. and South Korean officials in Seoul declined to comment on the report.

The newspaper said Roh wanted to discuss bilateral trade issues as well as South Korea's desire to take part in reconstruction work in the Gulf.

Roh and Bush last met in Washington last June.

Filipino police arrest rebel officer

MANILA (R) — A leader of the 1989 coup attempt that almost toppled Philippine President Corason Aquino was arrested while visiting his parents for the Easter holidays, police said Monday.

"For the people," shouted discharged Navy Captain Juancho Sabban, raising a clenched fist as police presented him to reporters in Manila.

National Police Director General Cesar Nazareno said Sabban, 34, was seized while riding a bicycle Sunday near his parents' home in Tuguegarao, some 340 kilometres north of

Manila.

Sabban, who did not resist arrest, carried a 300,000 peso (\$17,800) prize on his head.

Police said he was a member of the "core group" led by Renegade Colonel Gregorio Honasan which mounted the sixth and bloodiest coup attempt against Aquino in December 1989.

They said he was also a member of the dissident Young Officers' Union which explored a possible alliance late last year with Communist guerrillas in an attempt to topple Aquino.

Sabban was the seventh rebel officer captured since January.

Honasan, the most wanted man in the dissident group, remains at large.

The armed forces Monday freed nine army officers and 181 enlisted men after an investigation cleared them of involvement in the 1989 mutiny, an army spokesman said.

They had been detained for almost a year, he said.

The soldiers belonged to an army infantry division based outside Manila, some of whose units marched to the capital during the coup attempt in support of the rebels.

Benin president accepts election defeat

COTONOU (R) — Incumbent Mathieu Kerekou has accepted defeat in Benin's presidential elections, easing fear in the West African state that he might cling to power by force.

"I express my sincere and warm congratulations to Nicéphore Soglo, who, right now, appears as a worthy successor and to whom I will hand over the authority of the president of the republic of our country as soon as he is available," Kerekou said on state radio on Sunday night.

Soglo, a Western-trained technocrat, clinched 67 per cent of votes in a decisive second round vote on March 24.

Kerekou, whose public silence since his defeat provoked fear he

might refuse to stand down, urged Beninese to back the new president and appealed for calm in the coastal state sandwiched between Nigeria and Togo.

People who fled last week from northern Benin, a Kerekou stronghold, said his supporters were attacking people suspected of voting for Soglo.

"To all these victims, to whom I call for forgiveness, I want to make it a point to express my solidarity and all my sympathy," Kerekou said.

"I am firmly condemning all acts of provocation, violence and vandalism that occurred in the northern regions and led to the flight of a good number of our

compatriots toward the southern regions, in deplorable conditions."

Soglo flew to Paris for treatment of undisclosed health problems last week. His inauguration, originally set for Monday, has been indefinitely postponed.

Many people in Benin believe in voodoo and are convinced a Kerekou curse provoked Soglo's illness.

Kerekou took power in a 1972 coup, swung Benin to Marxism, and drove the country to virtual bankruptcy. He was the first mainland African president voted out of office in the wave of democratic sentiment sweeping the continent.

Honecker affair triggers rumours of deal to avoid trial

BERLIN (AP) — Erich Honecker's mysterious flight to Moscow, putting him out of the reach of German courts, has left bitterness among the eastern Germans whose lives he once controlled.

Some believe the former Communist leader's escape was arranged to avoid a trial that may have produced embarrassing revelations about cold war relationships among the two Germanys and the Soviet Union.

"It's horrible, the fact that after all his manipulating here, he could still manipulate the system and sneak away," said Monika Reissa, a 45-year-old cafeteria worker in former East Berlin.

"It's an insult that Honecker got off," said Thomas Mueller, 42, an unemployed mechanic. "Maybe we should have finished him off like (Nicolaie) Ceausescu."

The Romanian dictator was overthrown and executed in December 1989.

Honecker, as leader of East Germany, was Moscow's close ally for 18 years until his ouster in the fall 1989 peaceful revolution. Before rising to Communist Party chief, he was in charge of building

the Berlin Wall and enforcing a police state.

Western German authorities issued a warrant for Honecker's arrest last year after investigations linked him to orders given to border guards to shoot people trying to flee East Germany. Nearly 200 were killed over the years.

Honecker, 78, was in a Soviet army hospital outside Berlin for 11 months undergoing treatment for various ailments. On March 13, Soviet authorities spirited him away to Moscow, saying he needed specialised care.

For many eastern Germans, Honecker's flight took even more of the gloss off German reunification, which has brought economic hardship along with freedom.

A day after Honecker's departure, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's spokesman acknowledged that the Soviets had given Bonn more than an hour's warning of the departure. Kohl did not intervene.

Since then, the German government has demanded Honecker's return and denied any deal was made allowing Honecker to

leave. Kohl's government also has said nothing could be done to force his return.

Rumours persist of an arrangement or German acquiescence in the flight.

Stern, a widely read weekly, said Moscow had signalled Bonn it opposed putting Honecker on trial and that freeing him became an "important precondition" for Soviet ratification of the six-nation treaty approving German unity.

Behind this theory is the view that the Kremlin did not want its close relationship with East Germany discussed in an open court.

Karsten Voigt, foreign affairs specialist for the opposition Social Democrats, said German officials "did nothing to get Honecker out of the Soviet hospital and into German hands. For months they just let the whole matter sleep."

He said the Soviets assumed that Germany, for the sake of relations and increasing trade, would make only a pro forma protest if Honecker was moved to Moscow, "and that's exactly what happened."

TASS, the Soviet News Agency, called the German response a "realistic approach... to relations with the Soviet Union."

Speculation arose that a trial might have revealed unsavory aspects of relations between the Germanys before reunification, which were a strange mixture of antagonism and cooptation.

From 1964 to 1988, West Germany bought freedom for an estimated 50,000 political prisoners in East Germany at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars apiece.

"There were some among us who thought this was a dirty business, because it had this odium of buying and selling people, and because it was done with the communists," said a German official with inside knowledge of the practice.

West Germany also paid billions for improvements in roads across East Germany in return for easier access to West Berlin, 110 miles (177 kilometres) inside Communist territory, and heavily subsidised trade between the two states.

Espionage was rampant and

there were numerous scandals involving East German agents in high ranks of the Bonn government. Willy Brandt resigned as chancellor in 1974 after one of his closest aides, Guenther Guillaume, was unmasked as a spy.

Still, the Germanys gradually improved relations.

In 1987, Kohl gave Honecker a red-carpet welcome in Bonn for a visit hailed as a landmark in relations.

Since Honecker got away, German justice officials have sought to assure the public those guilty of repression in former East Germany will be punished.

Last week, prosecutors accused Honecker's former security chief, Erich Mielke, of providing training and weapons for West German terrorists of the Red Army Faction in the early 1980s.

Mielke, 83, is hospitalised in a Berlin prison.

Two other former politburo members — Harry Tisch, 65, and Hermann Axen, 75 — have been indicted for misusing public funds. Tisch's trial began in Janu-

Column 8

Tower of Pisa's leaning accelerated in last 3 months

PISA, Italy (R) — The Tower of Pisa is leaning at a faster rate than before, according to measurements for the first three months of this year. The measurements, made by two Pisa University professors, showed the tower which tilted by 1.18 millimetres (0.046 inches) in the whole of 1990, has leaned by another one millimetre (0.039 inches) since the beginning of this year. The finding added to worries that the 800-year-old leaning tower, one of Italy's major tourist attractions, now leaning about five metres (16.5 feet) off the perpendicular, was in danger of collapse. A report by a committee of experts studying ways to save the 55-metre (180-foot) high tower is expected in the next few weeks. The tower has been closed to the public since January 1990 after experts decided it was dangerous for visitors to climb its 294 winding steps.

Bush goes fishing

ISLAMORADA, Florida (R) — President George Bush took time off from official duties and began a three-day fishing holiday in the Florida Keys. Bush was accompanied by his wife Barbara and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady and his wife to the resort city of Islamorada, 100 miles (160 km) south of Miami. It was his first holiday since the Gulf war ended on Feb. 28 and the third year in a row he had come to the keys for fishing.

New archbishop accused of endangering church

LONDON (R) — The new Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, faced an extraordinary attack Sunday from a priest who called in a newspaper article for the clergy to sideline him. Headlined "deliver us, lord, from this man," the article was printed opposite the editorial page in the Sunday Telegraph. The right-wing newspaper said it was "necessarily anonymous." The national Church of England, founded nearly 500 years ago by King Henry VIII, was in danger, the article said, and the church would be well advised "to marginalise the archbishop before he marginalises the rest of us." Carey, 55, is on the radical evangelical wing of the Church of England, another church of the world's 70 million anglicans. He has vowed to try to revive the church, steadily losing members with a decade of Evangelism. Priests could face regular assessment. Their freehold tenure of their parishes might be replaced, by short-term contracts. But article's author countered that Carey's corporate approach threatened the existence of the parish, the basis of church life.

200th anniversary of Camembert cheese celebrated

VIMOUTIERS, France (AP) — Traditional cheese-makers have celebrated the 200th anniversary of Camembert cheese at an Easter weekend fair in the heart of Normandy's dairy country. The artisans demonstrated their techniques for making what they call "real" Camembert using raw milk, something most consumers abroad never taste. "Milk being a carrier of germs, real Camembert,